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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY  
GANDHI SERIES

# TOWARDS LASTING PEACE

BY  
M. K. GANDHI

EDITOR & PUBLISHER  
ANAND T. HINGORANI



1956

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN  
CHAUPATTY ; BOMBAY

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## MESSAGE

I AM pleased to learn that Sri Anand T. Hingorani is going to bring out a volume entitled "TOWARDS LASTING PEACE", comprising selections from Mahatma Gandhi's writings regarding War, Colonialism, Imperialism, Exploitation of one nation by another, Racial Discrimination and Domination, etc. Gandhiji's writings have a lasting value and particularly at the present juncture in the affairs of the world, they have a value of their own. It is, therefore, a matter of gratification that a volume dealing with these subjects is going to be brought out.

RAJENDRA PRASAD

## PREFATORY NOTE

We are very glad that by an arrangement with Sri Anand T. Hingorani, and with the kind permission of the Navajivan Trust, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is able to include in the Book University selected works of Gandhiji.

We have been feeling that we should have a special Gandhi Series in the Book University, so that his mission and teachings might be available to the public at a cheap price.

As regards the value of this work, we cannot improve upon what has been stated by Rashtrapati Rajendra Prasad in his message for this work.

NAINI TAL

*June 15, 1956*

K. M. Munshi

## PREFACE

Enshrined in the pages of this, the first volume of the *new* "Gandhi Series", is the message of universal peace and brotherhood, of love and non-violence, as preached and practised by Mahatma Gandhi throughout his long, illustrious life. To-day when the whole world has grown sick and weary of organized violence and warfare, and when the humanity is in a highly chastened mood as a result of the terrible blood-baths it has had repeatedly to go through in the recent past, this noble message of Gandhiji indeed acquires an added significance and appeal. It also serves as a soothing balm to the aching minds of men all over the globe.

The message has the force of eternal truth behind it and the backing of sincerity and successful experience, and is addressed to all the nations of the earth, big and small, particularly to the warring nations and to those who live upon the exploitation of others and see nothing wrong in racial discrimination. There is a sort of an inspired fire and a prophetic fervour about this message which proceeds from the very depths of Gandhiji's agonized soul and which, as such, cannot but evoke a measure of response from every human heart.

It has been a life-long conviction with Gandhiji that the mankind and its civilization can be saved from destruction only through non-violence, and that there is no deliverance either for India or for the world through clash of arms. He rules out retaliation altogether and feels that human dignity can best be preserved by following not the Law of the Jungle, but by faithful adherence to the Law of Love—the Law of Non-violence—which indeed is the Law of Life.

By non-violence, however, Gandhiji does not mean non-violence of the weak which is only "a cover for cowardice". His non-violence is made of "stern stuff"; it is "firmer than the firmest metal known to the scientists." It is the supreme virtue of the brave and knows no defeat. Such non-

violence is, according to him, mightier than the mightiest weapon ever invented by the ingenuity of man, and is certainly more powerful than the Atom Bomb by which so much store is being set to-day by the believers in violence. Gandhiji characterizes the destructive power of the Atom Bomb as a first class tragedy and an unmitigated evil out of which nothing but evil can flow. The Atom Bomb, he says, "will not be destroyed by counter-bombs, even as violence cannot be by counter-violence". And he strongly holds the belief that if mankind has to get out of violence, it can do so only through non-violence, for "hatred can be overcome only by love."

As an effective substitute for the violent, armed warfare, Gandhiji presents the nations with a technique of non-violent, unarmed resistance, popularly known as *Satyagraha*, before which, as he puts it, "the bayonet runs to rust and gunpowder turns to dust." This *Satyagraha* of his conception is rooted in the twin-principle of Truth and Non-violence, and is capable of being offered individually no less than on a mass scale, for Gandhiji believes that "if it is possible to train millions in the black art of violence, which is the law of the brute, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of regenerate man." And he gives a solemn warning that "unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence, of which the war is the natural expression and Atom Bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world."

May this message of our Great Seer and Sage lead to the searching of our hearts and expel all that besmirches our souls, and may it find an abiding place in the minds of those who happen to control the destinies of the human race to-day, so that sincere efforts be made by them along the lines indicated by Gandhiji for establishing true and lasting peace in the world!

7, Edmonstone Road,  
Allahabad.  
June 8, 1956

ANAND T. HINGORANI

## TOWARDS PERMANENT PEACE

*"If recognized leaders of mankind, who have control over engines of destruction, were wholly to renounce their use with full knowledge of implications, permanent peace can be obtained."*

NOT TO BELIEVE in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have realized this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of conditions of attainment thereof.

If recognized leaders of mankind, who have control over engines of destruction, were wholly to renounce their use with full knowledge of implications, permanent peace can be obtained.

This is clearly impossible without the great Powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic designs. This again seems impossible without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and, therefore, increase their material possessions. It is my conviction that the root of the evil is want of a living faith in a living God.

It is a first-class human tragedy that peoples of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus, whom they describe as the Prince of Peace, show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus's message to select individuals. I have been taught from my childhood, and I have tested the truth by experience, that primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility



that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creation. If even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our life-time visible peace established on earth.

—*Harijan*: May 16, 1936.

## II

### THE LAW OF LOVE

*"The Law of Love will work, just as the Law of Gravitation will work, whether we accept it or no. Just as a scientist will work wonders out of various applications of the laws of Nature, even so a man who applies the Law of Love with scientific precision can work greater wonders."*

CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, we are acting non-violently towards one another in daily life. All well-constructed societies are based on the Law of Non-violence. I have found that life persists in the midst of destruction and, therefore, there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well-ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And, if that is the Law of Life, we have to work it out in daily life. Wherever there are jars, wherever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love. In a crude manner I have worked it out in my life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are solved. I have found, however, that this Law of Love has answered as the law of destruction has never done. In India, we have had an ocular demonstration of the operation of this Law on the widest scale possible. I do not claim that non-violence has penetrated the three hundred millions, but I do claim that it has penetrated deeper than any other message, and in an

incredibly short time. We have not been all uniformly non-violent; and with the vast majority, non-violence has been a matter of policy. Even so, I want you to find out if the country has not made phenomenal progress under the protecting power of non-violence.

It takes a fairly strenuous course of training to attain to a mental state of non-violence. In daily life, it has to be a course of discipline though one may not like it, like, for instance, the life of a soldier. But I agree that, unless there is a hearty co-operation of the mind, the mere outward observance will be simply a mask, harmful both to the man himself and to others. The perfect state is reached only when mind and body and speech are in proper co-ordination. But it is always a case of intense mental struggle. It is not that I am incapable of anger, for instance; but I succeed almost on all occasions to keep my feelings under control. Whatever may be the result, there is always in me a conscious struggle for following the Law of Non-violence deliberately and ceaselessly. Such a struggle leaves one stronger for it. Non-violence is a weapon of the strong. With the weak, it might easily be hypocrisy. Fear and love are contradictory terms. Love is reckless in giving away, oblivious as to what it gets in return. Love wrestles with the world as with itself, and ultimately gains a mastery over all other feelings. My daily experience, as of those who are working with me, is that every problem lends itself to solution if we are determined to make the Law of Truth and Non-violence the Law of Life. For, Truth and Non-violence are to me faces of the same coin.

Whether mankind will consciously follow the Law of Love, I do not know. But that need not perturb us. The Law will work, just as the Law of Gravitation will work, whether we accept it or no. And just as a scientist will work wonders out of various applications of the laws of Nature, even so a man who applies the Law of Love with scientific precision can work greater wonders. For, the

force of Non-violence is infinitely more wonderful and subtle than the forces of Nature, like, for instance, electricity. The men who discovered for us the Law of Love were greater scientists than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough, and so it is not possible for every one to see all its workings. Such, at any rate, is the hallucination, if it is one under which I am labouring. The more I work at this Law, the more I feel the delight in life, the delight in the scheme of this universe. It gives me a peace and a meaning of the mysteries of Nature that I have no power to describe.

—*Young India*: October 1, 1931.

### III

## TRUTH ABOUT NON-VIOLENCE

*“Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.”*

NON-VIOLENCE CANNOT BE taught to a person who fears to die and has no power of resistance. A helpless mouse is not non-violent because he is always eaten by pussy. He would gladly eat the murderess if he could, but he ever tries to flee from her. We do not call him a coward, because he is made by nature to behave no better than he does. But a man who, when faced by danger, behaves like a mouse, is rightly called a coward. He harbours violence and hatred in his heart and would kill his enemy if he could without being hurt himself. He is stranger to non-violence. All sermonizing on it will be lost on him. Bravery is foreign to his nature. Before he can understand non-violence, he has to be taught to stand his ground and even suffer death in the attempt to defend himself against

the aggressor who bids fair to overwhelm him. To do otherwise would be to confirm his cowardice and take him further away from non-violence.\* Whilst I may not actually help anyone to retaliate, I must not let a coward seek shelter behind non-violence so-called. Not knowing the stuff of which non-violence is made, many have honestly believed that running away from danger every time was a virtue compared to offering resistance, especially when it is fraught with danger to one's life. As a teacher of non-violence I must, so far as it is possible for me, guard against such an unmanly belief.

Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. Destruction is not the law of the humans. Man lives freely only by his readiness to die, if need be, at the hands of his brother, never by killing him. Every murder or other injury, no matter for what cause, committed or inflicted on another is a crime against humanity.

But I see quite clearly that this truth about non-violence cannot be delivered to the helpless. They must be taught to defend themselves.

The sceptic, then argues: "You cannot teach non-violence to the weak and you dare not take it to the powerful. Why not admit that it is a futile creed?" The answer is, non-violence can be effectively taught only by living it. When there is an unmistakable demonstration of its power and efficacy, the weak will shed their weakness and the mighty will quickly realize the valuelessness of might and, becoming meek, acknowledge the sovereignty of non-violence. It is my humble effort to show that this is no unattainable goal even in mass action.

—*Harijan*: July 20, 1935.

\* The doctrine of non-violence is not for the weak and the cowardly; it is meant for the brave and the strong. The bravest man allows himself to be killed without killing. And he desists from killing or injuring, because he knows that it is wrong to injure. —*Young India*: Dec. 15. 1920.

#### IV

### THE GREATEST FORCE

*"India has an unbroken tradition of non-violence from times immemorial. . . . It is my unshakable belief that her destiny is to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind. It may take ages to come to fruition. But, so far as I can judge, no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of that mission."*

NON-VIOLENCE TO BE A CREED has to be all pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others. That would be a policy, not a life-force. That being so, I cannot be indifferent about the war that Italy is now waging against Abyssinia. But I have resisted most pressing invitations to express my opinion and give a lead to the country. Self-suppression is often necessary in the interest of truth and non-violence. If India had as a nation inbibed the creed of non-violence, corporate or national, I should have had no hesitation in giving a lead. But, in spite of a certain hold I have on the millions of this country, I know the very grave and glaring limitations of that hold. India has an unbroken tradition of non-violence from times immemorial. But at no time in her ancient history, as far as I know it, has it had complete non-violence in action pervading the whole land. Nevertheless, it is my unshakable belief that her destiny is to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind. It may take ages to come to fruition. But, so far as I can judge, no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of that mission.

Be that as it may, it is seasonable to contemplate the implications of that matchless force. Three concrete questions were, the other day, incidentally asked by friends:

1. What could ill-armed Abyssinia do against well-armed Italy, if she were non-violent?

2. What could England, the greatest and the most powerful member of the League, do against determined Italy, if she (England) were non-violent in your sense of the term?

3. What could India do, if she suddenly became non-violent in your sense of the term?

Before I answer the questions, let me lay down five simple axioms of non-violence as I know it:

- (a) Non-violence implies as complete a self-purification as is humanly possible.
- (b) Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.
- (c) Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, *i.e.*, the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent.
- (d) There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat.
- (e) The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory—if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality, where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.

The foregoing questions may be answered in the light of these axioms.

1. If Abyssinia were non-violent, she would have no arms, would want none. She would make no appeal to the League or any other power for armed intervention. She would never give any cause for complaint. And Italy would find nothing to conquer if Abyssinians would not offer armed resistance, nor would they give co-operation willing or forced. Italian occupation, in that case, would mean that of the land without its people. That, however,

is not Italy's exact object. She seeks submission of the people of that beautiful land.

2. If Englishmen were as a nation to become non-violent at heart, they would shed imperialism, they would give up the use of arms. The moral force generated by such an act of renunciation would stagger Italy into willing surrender of her designs. England would, then, be a living embodiment of the axioms I have laid down. The effect of such conversion would mean the greatest miracle of all ages. And yet, if non-violence is not an idle dream, some such thing has some day to come to pass somewhere. I live in that faith.

3. The last question may be answered thus. As I have said, India as a nation is not non-violent in the full sense of the term. Neither has she any capacity for offering violence—not because she has no arms. Physical possession of arms is the least necessity of the brave. Her non-violence is that of the weak; she betrays her weakness in many of her daily acts. She appears before the world to-day as a decaying nation. I mean here not in the mere political sense, but essentially in the non-violent, moral sense. She lacks the ability to offer physical resistance. She has no consciousness of strength. She is conscious only of her weakness. If she were otherwise, there would be no communal problems, nor political. If she were non-violent in the consciousness of her strength, Englishmen would lose their role of distrustful conquerors. We may talk politically as we like, and often legitimately blame the English rulers. But if we, as Indians, could but for a moment visualize ourselves as a strong people disdaining to strike, we should cease to fear Englishmen whether as soldiers, traders or administrators, and they to distrust us. Therefore, if we became truly non-violent, we should carry Englishmen with us in all we might do. In other words, we, being millions, would be the greatest moral force in the world, and Italy would listen to our friendly word.

The reader has, I hope, by now perceived that my argu-

ment is but a feeble and clumsy attempt to prove my axioms which to be such must be self-proved.

Till my eyes of geometrical understanding had been opened, my brain was swimming as I read and re-read the twelve axioms of Euclid. After the opening of my eyes, geometry seemed to be the easiest science to learn. Much more so is the case with non-violence. It is a matter of faith and experience, not of argument, beyond a point. So long as the world refuses to believe, she must await a miracle, *i.e.*, an ocular demonstration of non-violence on a mass scale. They say this is against human nature—non-violence is only for the individual. If so, where is the difference in kind between man and beast?

—*Harijan*: Oct. 12, 1935.

## v

## GOD OF LOVE, NOT WAR

*"Individuals or nations, who would practise non-violence, must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last) their all except honour. It is, therefore, inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e., modern imperialism, which is frankly based on force for its defence."*

*The Statesman* of Delhi has devoted four articles to an unmeasured condemnation of the no-war movement led by Canon Sheppard and other earnest Christians in England. The paper has dragged into its support the authority of the *Bhagavad Gita* in these words:

"Indeed, the true but difficult teaching of Christianity seems to be that society must fight its enemies but love them.



“Such, too,—will Mr. Gandhi please note—is the clear teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita* where Krishna tells Arjuna that victory also goes to him who fights with complete fearlessness and is utterly devoid of hatred. Indeed, on the highest plane the argument between the conscientious objector and the knightly warrior is for ever settled in the second book of that great classic. We have little space to quote, and the whole poem deserves to be read, not once but many times.”

The writer of the articles, perhaps, does not know that the terrorist has also used in his defence the very verses quoted by him. But the fact is that a dispassionate reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* has revealed to me a meaning wholly contrary to the one given to it by *The Statesman* writer. He has forgotten that Arjuna was no conscientious objector in the sense the Western war-resisters are. Arjuna believed in war. He had fought the Kaurava hosts many times before. But he was unnerved when the two armies were drawn up in battle array, and when he suddenly realized that he had to fight his nearest kinsmen and revered teachers. It was not love of man or the hatred of war that had actuated the questioner. Krishna could give no other answer than he did. The immortal author of the *Mahabharata*, of which the *Gita* is one—no doubt, the brightest—of the many gems contained in that literary mine, has shown to the world the futility of war by giving the victors an empty glory, leaving but seven victors alive out of millions said to have been engaged in the fight in which unnamable atrocities were used on either side. But the *Mahabharata* has a better message even than the demonstration of war as a delusion and folly. It is the spiritual history of man, considered as an immortal being, and has used with a magnifying lens a historical episode considered, in his times, of moment for the tiny world round him, but in terms of present-day values of no significance. In those days, the globe had not shrunk to a pinhead, as it has to-day, on

which the slightest movement on one spot affects the whole. The *Mahabharata* depicts for all time the eternal struggle that goes on daily between the forces of good and evil in the human breast and in which, though good is ever victorious, evil does put up a brave show and baffles even the keenest conscience. It shows also the only way to right action.

But whatever the true message of the *Bhagavad Gita* may be, what matters to the leaders of the peace movement is not what the *Gita* says but what the *Bible*, which is their spiritual dictionary, says, and then, too, not what meaning the Church authorities give to it, but what meaning a prayerful reading of it yields to the reader. What matters most of all is the objectors' knowledge of the implications of the law of love or *ahimsa*, inadequately rendered in English as non-violence. The articles of *The Statesman* are, perhaps, fair challenge to the objectors. I am sorry I do not know enough of the movement to give a definite opinion. My opinion need have no weight whatsoever with the objectors. But it has, inasmuch as I know intimately some of them who even correspond with me. And now they have gone a step further, in that they have adopted almost as their text-book Mr. Richard Gregg's book called *The Power of Non-violence*, which is claimed by its author to be a Western interpretation of what non-violence, as I interpret it, stands for. It may not, therefore, be presumptuous on my part, if I set down without argument the implications and conditions of the success of non-violence. Here they are :

- (1) Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force.
- (2) In the last resort, it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love.
- (3) Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property, though its

habitual practice does prove a better bulwark than the possession of armed men to defend them. Non-violence, in the very nature of things, is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.

- (4) Individuals or nations, who would practise non-violence, must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is, therefore, inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, *i.e.*, modern imperialism, which is frankly based on force for its defence.
- (5) Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all—children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have, therefore, equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.
- (6) It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the law is good enough for individuals, it is not for masses of mankind.

*Harijan: Sept. 5, 1936.*

## VI

### THE LAW OF OUR BEING

*“Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But the victories of physical science would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life which is summed up in Love, which is the Law of our Being.”*

*The Statesman* has devoted a reasoned article to the argument advanced by me in reply to its criticism of Canon Sheppard's war against war. In that article, a very clever attempt has been made to dispute the whole of the position taken up by me.

The writer says that whilst the *Bhagavad Gita* assists him, it does not assist the terrorist. Once you admit the lawfulness of the use of physical force for purposes other than the benefit of the person against whom it is used, as in the case of a surgeon against his patient, you cannot draw an arbitrary line of distinction. The *Mahabharata*, of which the *Gita* is only a tiny chapter, describes in gruesome detail a night slaughter of the innocents which, but for our recent experiences of our civilized war, would be considered unbelievable in actual practice. The grim fact is that the terrorists have, in absolute honesty, earnestness and with cogency, used the *Gita* which some of them knew by heart, in defence of their doctrine and policy. Only, they have no answer to my interpretation of the *Gita* except to say that mine is wrong and theirs is right. Time alone will show whose is right. The *Gita* is not a theoretical treatise. It is a living but silent guide whose directions one has to understand by patient striving.

*The Statesman* writer next likens Canon Sheppard's position to that of Arjuna. Surely, this is a faulty analogy, hastily drawn. Arjuna was the commander-in-chief of the Pandava forces. He became suddenly paralyzed when he contemplated the awful scene before him. As general, he knew exactly what he had to do. He knew that he had to war against his cousins. His paralysis was due to momentary weakness. He could not have given up the task before him without creating the utmost confusion and disorder, and bringing disgrace on himself and his innumerable friends and followers. He was bound to engage himself and his followers in the terrible slaughter for which he had trained himself and them. It is profitless to conjecture what would have happened if non-

violence in thought, word and deed had suddenly but really possessed him.

That rich possession, let us hope, has come to Dick Sheppard and his companions. Anyway, so far as I know, his position is wholly different from Arjuna's. He is no general of an army drawn up in battle array. He makes no distinction between kinsmen and others. For him man is man, no matter where he is born, or what his skin is, or what he calls himself. After having prayerfully searched through the book, which for him is the Book of Life, he has been driven to the conclusion that he may not hurt his fellow-men for gain for himself or his country, and that, therefore, he must himself abstain from participation, direct or indirect, in war. He naturally takes the next step of preaching to his neighbours the doctrine of peace or love and goodwill towards men without exception. This is a position which Arjuna never took up.

But *The Statesman* writer has many strings to his bow. And the strongest is his denial of non-violence or love as the law of the human race. If love or non-violence be not the law of our being, the whole of my argument falls to pieces, and there is no escape from a periodical recrudescence of war, each succeeding one outdoing the preceding one in ferocity. I cannot undertake, and least of all through a newspaper article written during moments snatched from the daily routine, to prove that love is the source and end of life. But I venture to make some relevant suggestions, which may pave the way for an understanding of the Law. All the teachers that ever lived have preached that law with more or less vigour. If Love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death. Life is a perpetual triumph over the grave. If there is a fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the law and its application in practice to his own personal life. All the saints of the world, ancient and modern, were, each according to his light and capacity, a living illustra-

tion of that supreme Law of our Being. That the brute in us seems so often to gain an easy triumph is true enough. That, however, does not disprove the law. It shows the difficulty of practice. How should it be otherwise with a law which is as high as Truth itself? When the practice of the law becomes universal, God will reign on earth as He does in heaven. I need not be reminded that earth and heaven are in us. We know the earth, we are strangers to the heaven within us. If it is allowed that for some the practice of love is possible, it is arrogance not to allow even the possibility of its practice in all the others. Not very remote ancestors of ours indulged in cannibalism and many other practices which we would to-day call loathsome. No doubt, in those days, too, there were Dick Sheppards who must have been laughed at and possibly pilloried for preaching the (to them) strange doctrine of refusing to eat fellowmen. Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But victories of physical science would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life, which is summed up in Love which is the Law of our Being. I know that it cannot be proved by argument. It shall be proved by persons living it in their lives in utter disregard of consequences to themselves. There is no real gain without sacrifice. And since demonstration of the Law of Love is the realest gain, sacrifice too must be the greatest required.

The rest of the argument advanced by *The Statesman* writer in refutation of mine needs no answer, if the Law is denied or doubted.

One point may, however, be dealt with in passing. The writer seems to pooh-pooh the idea of honour derived from individual and national gain. He says: "What is this honour that would be left to a nation that voluntarily destroyed itself?" There is no question for one of self-destruction, voluntary or otherwise. But there is of "a nation allowing itself to be destroyed" for the sake of pre-

serving its honour, as would be a case, say, if Indians died to a man, without lifting a finger, in their determination not to surrender to the will of an invading host. A woman defends her own honour and that of her sex, when she non-violently refuses to the point of death the advances of a rake. Young Prahlad non-violently risked his life to defend his honour, which consisted in his persistence in declaring his belief in God. Jesus defended his honour and that of man when he preferred the death of a felon to the denial of his faith.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 26, 1936.

## VII

### NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

*“Hitler and Mussolini on the one hand, and Stalin on the other, are able to show the immediate effectiveness of violence. But it will be as transitory as that of Chenghi’s slaughter. But the effects of Buddha’s non-violent action persist and are likely to grow with age.”*

PASSIVE RESISTANCE IS A misnomer for non-violent resistance. It is much more active than violent resistance. It is direct, ceaseless, but three-fourths invisible and only one-fourth visible. In its visibility it seems to be ineffective, e.g., the spinning wheel, which I have called the symbol of non-violence. In its invisibility it appears ineffective, but it is really intensely active and most effective in ultimate result. This knowledge enables me to detect in the way in which the votaries of non-violence are doing their spinning. I ask for more vigilance and more untiredness. Non-violence is an intensely active force when properly understood and used. A violent man’s activity is most visible,

while it lasts. But it is always transitory. What can be more visible than the Abyssinians done to death by Italians? There it was lesser violence pitted against much greater. But if the Abyssinians had retired from the field and allowed themselves to be slaughtered, their seeming inactivity would have been much more effective though not for the moment visible. Hitler and Mussolini on the one hand, and Stalin on the other, are able to show the immediate effectiveness of violence. But it will be as transitory as that of Chenghis' slaughter. But the effects of Buddha's non-violent action persist and are likely to grow with age. And the more it is practised, the more effective and inexhaustible it becomes, and ultimately the whole world stands agape and exclaims: 'A miracle has happened!' All miracles are due to the silent and effective working of invisible forces. Non-violence is the most invisible and the most effective.

Q. I have no doubt in my mind about the superiority of non-violence. But the thing that bothers me is about its exercise on a large scale, the difficulty of so disciplining the mass mind on the point of love. It is easier to discipline individuals. What should be the strategy when they break out? Do we retreat or do we go on?

A. I have had that experience in the course of our movement here. People do not gain the training by preaching. Non-violence cannot be preached. It has to be practised. The practice of violence can be taught to people by outward symbols. You shoot at boards, then at targets, then at beasts. Then you are passed as an expert in the art of destruction. The non-violent man has no outward weapon and, therefore, not only his speech but his action also seems ineffective. I may say all kinds of sweet words to you without meaning them. On the other hand, I may have real love in me and yet my outward expression may be forbidding. Then, outwardly my action in both cases may be the same and yet the effect may be different. For, the



effect of our action is often more potent when it is not patently known. Thus, the unconscious effect you are making on me I may never know. It is, nevertheless, infinitely greater than the conscious effect. In violence, there is nothing invisible. Non-violence, on the other hand, is three-fourths invisible, and so the effect is in the inverse ratio to its invisibility. Non-violence, when it becomes active, travels with extraordinary velocity, and then it becomes a miracle. So the mass mind is affected first unconsciously, then consciously. When it becomes consciously affected, there is demonstrable victory. In my own experience, when people seemed to be weakening there was no consciousness of defeat in me. Thus, I was fuller of hope in the efficacy of non-violence after the renunciation of civil disobedience in 1922, and to-day I continue to be in the same hopeful mood. It is not a mere emotional thing. Supposing I saw no signs of dawn coming, I should not lose faith. Everything has to come in proper time.

I have discussions here with my co-workers about the scavenging work we are doing. 'Why can't we do it after *Swaraj*?' they say. 'We may do it better after *Swaraj*.' I say to them: 'No. The reform has to come to-day, it must not wait for *Swaraj*; in fact, the right type of *Swaraj* will come only out of such work.' Now I cannot show you, as perhaps I cannot show some of my co-workers, the connection between *Swaraj* and scavenging. If I have to win *Swaraj* non-violently, I must discipline my people. The maimed and the blind and the leprous cannot join the army of violence. There is also an age-limit for serving in the army. For a non-violent struggle, there is no age-limit; the blind and the maimed and the bed-ridden may serve, and not only men but women also. When the spirit of non-violence pervades the people and actually begins to work, its effect is visible to all.

But now comes your poser. There are people, you say, who do not believe in non-violence as you do. Are you to

sit quiet? The friends ask: 'If not now, when will you act?' I say in reply: 'I may not succeed in my lifetime, but my faith that victory can only come through non-violence is stronger than ever. When I spoke on the cult of the spinning wheel at Faizpur, a newspaper correspondent imputed astuteness to me. Nothing could be farther from my mind. When I came to Sevagram, I was told the people might not co-operate and might even boycott me. I said: 'That may be. But this is the way non-violence works.' If I go to a village which is still farther off, the experiment may work better. This thing has come in my search after the technique of non-violence. And each day that passes makes my faith brighter. I have come here to bring that faith to fruition and to die in the process if that is God's will. Non-violence, to be worth anything, has to work in the face of hostile forces. But there may be action in inaction. And action may be worse than inaction.

Q. Is it ever possible to administer violence in a spirit of love?

A. No. Never. I shall give you an illustration from my own experiment. A calf was lame and had developed terrible sores: he could not eat and breathed with difficulty. After three day's argument with myself and my co-workers, I put an end to its life. Now that action was non-violent because it was wholly unselfish, inasmuch as the sole purpose was to achieve the calf's relief from pain. Some people have called this an act of violence. I have called it a surgical operation. I should do exactly the same thing with my child, if he were in the same predicament. My point is that non-violence as the supreme law of our being ceases to be such the moment you talk of exceptions.

Q. How is a minority to act against an overwhelming majority?

A. I would say that a minority can do much more in the way of non-violence than a majority. I had an English friend called Symonds. He used to say: 'I am with you

so long as you are in a minority. After you are in a majority, we are quits.' I had less diffidence in handling my minority in South Africa than I had here in handling a majority. But it would be wholly wrong for that reason to say that non-violence is a weapon of the weak. The use of non-violence requires greater bravery than that of violence. When Daniel defied the laws of the Meads and Persians, his action was non-violent.

Q. Should the thought of consequences, that might accrue to the enemy as a result of your non-violence, at all constrain you?

A. Certainly. You may have to suspend your movement as I did in South Africa when the Government was faced with the revolt of European labour. The latter asked me to make common cause with them. I said 'no'.

Q. And non-violence will never rebound on you, whereas violence will be self-destroyed?

A. Yes. Violence must beget violence. But let me tell you that here, too, my argument has been countered by a great man who said: 'Look at the history of non-violence. Jesus dies on the cross, but his followers shed blood.' This proves nothing. We have no data before us to pass judgment. We do not know the whole of the life of Jesus. The followers, perhaps, had not imbibed fully the message of non-violence. But I must warn you against carrying the impression with you that mine is the final word on non-violence. I know my own limitations. I am but a humble seeker after Truth. And all I claim is that every experiment of mine has deepened my faith in non-violence as the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. Its use is not restricted to individuals merely, but it can be practised on a mass scale.

—*Harijan*: March 20, 1937.

VIII  
THE ENGLISH PACIFISTS

*"An essentially non-violent man does not calculate the consequences. The English pacifists...calculate, and when they speak of pacifism they do so with the mental reservation that when pacifism fails, arms might be used. With them not non-violence, but arms are the ultimate sanction."*

Q. How is it, that many of the English pacifists are talking of defence and elaborate plans of defence? May it not be possible to carry pacifism too far? Supposing Abyssinia had simply non-resisted and said to Italy: 'Do your worst,' would the Italians have been ashamed and desisted from their design? Lausbury said they would."

A. I shall take up the Abyssinian question first. I can answer it only in terms of active, resistant non-violence. Now non-violence is the activist force on earth, and it is my conviction that it never fails. But if the Abyssinians had adopted the attitude of non-violence of the strong *i.e.*, the non-violence which breaks to pieces but never bends, Mussolini would have had no interest in Abyssinia. Thus, if they had simply said: 'You are welcome to reduce us to dust or ashes, but you will not find one Abyssinian to co-operate with you,' what could Mussolini have done? He did not want a desert. Mussolini wanted submission and not defiance, and if he had met with the quiet, dignified and non-violent defiance that I have described, he would certainly have been obliged to retire. Of course, it is open to anyone to say that human nature has not been known to rise to such height. But if we have made unexpected progress in physical sciences, why may we do less in the science of the soul?

Now about the English pacifists. I know there are some

great and sincere men amongst them, but they are thinking in terms of pacifisms as distinguished from unadulterated non-violence. I am essentially a non-violent man, and I believe in war bereft of every trace of violence. An essentially non-violent man does not calculate the consequences. The English pacifists you are talking of calculate, and when they speak of pacifism they do so with the mental reservation that when pacifism fails, arms might be used. With them not non-violence but arms are the ultimate sanction, as was the case with Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. No, someone has to arise in England with the living faith to say that England, whatever happens, shall not use arms. They are a nation fully armed, and if they having the power deliberately refuse to use arms, theirs will be the first example of Christianity in active practice on a mass scale. That will be a real miracle.

—*Harijan*: May 14, 1938.

## IX

### LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE

*"I suggest that if it is brave, as it is, to die to a man fighting against odds, it is braver still to refuse to fight and yet to refuse to yield to the usurper. If death is a certainty in either case, is it not nobler to die with the breast bared to the enemy without malice against him within?"*

ONE MUST FEEL HAPPY that the danger of war has been averted for the time being. Is the price paid likely to be too great? Is it likely that honour has been sold? Is it a triumph of organized violence? Has Herr Hitler discovered a new technique of organizing violence which enables him to gain his end without shedding blood? I

do not profess to know European politics. But it does appear to me that small nationalities cannot exist in Europe with their heads erect. They must be absorbed by their larger neighbours. They must become vassals.

Europe has sold her soul for the sake of a seven days' earthly existence. The peace Europe gained at Munich is a triumph of violence; it is also its defeat. If England and France were sure of victory, they would certainly have fulfilled their duty of saving Czechoslovakia or of dying with it. But they quailed before the combined violence of Germany and Italy. But what have Germany and Italy gained? Have they added anything to the moral wealth of mankind?

In penning these lines, my concern is not with the great Powers. Their height dazes me. Czechoslovakia has a lesson for me and us in India. The Czechs could not have done anything else when they found themselves deserted by their two powerful allies. And yet I have the hardihood to say that if they had known the use of non-violence as a weapon for the defence of national honour, they would have faced the whole might of Germany with that of Italy thrown in. They would have spared England and France the humiliation of suing for a peace which was no peace; and to save their honour, they would have died to a man without shedding the blood of the robber. I must refuse to think that such heroism, or call it restraint, is beyond human nature. Human nature will only find itself when it fully realizes that to be human it has to cease to be beastly or brutal. Though we have the human form, without the attainment of the virtue of non-violence we still share the qualities of our remote reputed ancestor—the ourangoutang.

These are not idle words I am writing. Let the Czechs know that the Working Committee wrung itself with pain while their doom was being decided. The pain was quite selfish in a way. But on that account it was the more real. For though numerically we are a big nation, in terms of Europe, *i.e.* in terms of organized scientific violence, we

are smaller than Czechoslovakia. Our liberty is not merely threatened, we are fighting to regain it. The Czechs are fully armed; we are wholly unarmed. And so the Committee sat to deliberate what its duty was by the Czechs, what part the Congress was to play if the war cloud burst on us. Were we to bargain with England for our liberty and appear to befriend Czechoslovakia, or were we to live up to the creed of non-violence and say in the hour of trial for afflicted humanity that, consistently with our creed, we could not associate ourselves with war even though it might ostensibly be for the defence of Czechoslovakia, whose very existence was threatened for no fault of hers, or for the only fault that she was too small to defend herself singlehanded? The Working Committee had almost come to the conclusion that it would deny itself the opportunity of striking a bargain with England but would make its contribution to the world peace, to the defence of Czechoslovakia and to India's freedom by declaring to the world by its action that the way to peace with honour did not lie through the mutual slaughter of the innocents, but that it lay only and truly through the practice of organized non-violence even unto death.

And this was but the logical and natural step the Working Committee could have taken, if it was to prove true to its creed. If India could gain her freedom through non-violence, as Congressmen are to believe they can, she could also defend her freedom by the same means, and hence *a fortiori* could a smaller nation like Czechoslovakia.

I do not know what actually the Working Committee would have done if the war had come. But the war is only postponed. During the breathing time, I present the way of non-violence for acceptance by the Czechs. They do not yet know what is in store for them. They can lose nothing by trying the way of non-violence. The fate of Republican Spain is hanging in the balance. So is that of China. If in the end they all lose, they will do so not because their cause is not just, but because they are less

skilled in the science of destruction or because they are less under-manned. What would Republican Spain gain if it had Franco's resources, or China if she had Japan's skill in war, or the Czschs if they had the skill of Herr Hitler? I suggest that if it is brave, as it is, to die to a man fighting against odds, it is braver still to refuse to fight and yet to refuse to yield to the usurper. If death is a certainty in either case, is it not nobler to die with the breast bared to the enemy without malice against him within?

—*Harijan*: Oct. 8, 1938.

## X

## IF I WERE A CZECH

*"There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does."*

IF I HAVE CALLED THE ARRANGEMENT with Herr Hitler 'peace without honour', it was not to cast any reflection on British or French statesmen. I have no doubt that Mr. Chamberlain could not think of anything better. He knew his nation's limitations. He wanted to avoid war, if it could be avoided at all. Short of going to war, he pulled his full weight in favour of the Czechs. That it could not save honour was no fault of his. It would be so every time there is a struggle with Herr Hitler or Signor Mussolini.

It cannot be otherwise. Democracy dreads to spill blood. The philosophy for which the two dictators stand calls it cowardice to shrink from carnage. They exhaust the resources of poetic art in order to glorify organized murder.



There is no humbug about their word or deed. They are ever ready for war. There is nobody in Germany or Italy to cross their path. Their word is law.

It is different with Mr. Chamberlain or M. Daladier. They have their Parliaments and Chambers to please. They have parties to confer with. They cannot maintain themselves on a perpetual war-footing, if their language is to have a democratic accent about it.

Science of war leads one to dictatorship, pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy. England, France and America have to make choice. That is the challenge of the two dictators.

Russia is out of the picture just now. Russia has a dictator who dreams of peace and thinks he will wade to it through a sea of blood. No one can say what Russian dictatorship will mean to the world.

It was necessary to give this introduction to what I want to say to the Czechs and through them to all those nationalities which are called 'small' or 'weak'. I want to speak to the Czechs because their plight moved me to the point of physical and mental distress, and I felt that it would be cowardice on my part not to share with them the thoughts that were welling up within me. It is clear that the small nations must either come or be ready to come under the protection of the dictators, or be a constant menace to the peace of Europe. In spite of all the goodwill in the world, England and France cannot save them. Their intervention can only mean bloodshed and destruction such as has never been seen before. If I were a Czech, therefore, I would free these two nations from the obligation to defend my country. And yet I must live. I would not be a vassal to any nation or body. I must have absolute independence or perish. To seek to win in a clash of arms would be pure bravado. Not so, if in defying the might of one who would deprive me of my independence, I refuse to obey his will and perish unarmed in the attempt.

In so doing, though I lose the body, I save my soul, *i.e.* my honour.

This inglorious peace should be my opportunity. I must live down the humiliation and gain real independence.

But says a comforter: "Hitler knows no pity. Your spiritual effort will avail nothing before him."

My answer is: "You may be right. History has no record of a nation having adopted non-violent resistance. If Hitler is unaffected by my suffering, it does not matter. For, I shall have lost nothing worth. My honour is the only thing worth preserving. That is independent of Hitler's pity. But as a believer in non-violence, I may not limit its possibilities. Hitherto, he and his likes have built upon their invariable experience that men yield to force. Unarmed men, women and children, offering non-violent resistance without any bitterness in them, will be a novel experience for them. Who can dare say that it is not in their nature to respond to the higher and finer forces? They have the same soul that I have."

But says another comforter: "What you say is all right for you. But how do you expect your people to respond to the novel call? They are trained to fight. In personal bravery they are second to none in the world. For you now to ask them to throw away their arms and be trained for non-violent resistance, seems to me to be a vain attempt."

"You may be right. But I have a call I must answer. I must deliver my message to my people. This humiliation has sunk too deep in me to remain without an outlet. I, at least, must act up to the light that has dawned on me."

This is how I should, I believe, act if I were a Czech. When I first launched out on *satyagraha*, I had no companion. We were thirteen thousand men, women and children, against a whole nation capable of crushing the existence out of us. I did not know who would listen to me. It all came as in a flash. All the 13,000 did not fight. Many

fell back. But the honour of the nation was saved. New history was written by the South African *Satyagraha*.

A more apposite instance, perhaps, is that of Khan Saheb Abdul Gaffar Khan, the 'servant of God' as he calls himself, the 'pride of Afghan' as the Pathans delight to call him. He is sitting in front of me as I pen these lines. He has made several thousand of his people throw down their arms. He thinks he has imbibed the lesson of non-violence. He is not sure of his people. I have come to the Frontier Province, or rather he has brought me, to see with my own eyes what his men here are doing. I can say in advance and at once that these men know very little of non-violence. All the treasure they have on earth is their faith in their leader. I do not cite these soldiers of peace as at all a finished illustration. I cite them as an honest attempt being made by a soldier to convert fellow-soldiers to the ways of peace. I can testify that it is an honest attempt, and whether in the end it succeeds or fails, it will have its lessons for *satyagrahis* of the future. My purpose will be fulfilled if I succeed in reaching these men's hearts and making them see that, if their non-violence does not make them feel much braver than the possession of arms and the ability to use them, they must give up their non-violence, which is another name for cowardice, and resume their arms which there is nothing but their own will to prevent them from taking back.

I present Dr. Benes with a weapon not of the weak, but of the brave. There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does.

—*Harijan* Oct. 15, 1938.

XI  
WHY NOT GREAT POWERS ?

*"If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious."*

IN THE CRITICIZMS on my recent writings on the plight of Czechoslovakia, I have observed one thing which demands an answer.

Some critics argue that if the non-violent remedy I have suggested for the Czechs is only for comparatively weak because small nations like them, and not for the great Powers like England or France or America, it cannot be of much value, if any.

Now if the critics will re-read my article, they will see that I have refrained from suggesting it to these big Powers because of their bigness, in other words, because of my timidity. But there was a more potent reason for my not addressing them. They were not in distress and, therefore, in no need of any remedy. To use a medical expression, they were not ailing as Czechoslovakia was. Their existence was not threatened, as Czechoslovakia's was. Any appeal from me, therefore, to the great Powers would have amounted to an empty and unwanted sermon.

By experience, I have also found that people rarely become virtuous for virtue's sake. They become virtuous from necessity. Nor is there anything wrong in a man becoming good under pressure of circumstances. It would be no doubt better, if he becomes good for its own sake.

The Czechs were given a choice either to surrender peacefully to Germany's might, or to fight single-handed and risk almost certain destruction. It was at this moment that it became necessary for one like me to present an alter-

native, which had proved its effectiveness under somewhat similar circumstances. My appeal to the Czechs was, in my opinion, as appropriate as it would have been inappropriate in the case of the great Powers.

My critics might have, however, well asked why I had gone out of my self-prescribed orbit to speak to a Western nation, when I could not show cent percent success of non-violence on the Indian soil,—more especially now, when I had begun to entertain serious doubts as to whether Congressmen were really living upto their creed or policy of non-violence. Indeed, I had in mind the limitation and the present state of uncertainty about the Congress position. But my own faith in the non-violent remedy was as bright as ever when I wrote that article. And I felt that in the supreme hour of its trial, it would be cowardly on my part not to suggest to the Czechs the non-violent remedy for acceptance. What may ultimately prove impossible of acceptance by crores of people, undisciplined, and unused till but recently to corporate suffering, might be possible for a small, compact, disciplined nation inured to corporate suffering. I had no right to arrogate to myself any belief that India alone and no other nation was fit for non-violent action. I must confess that I have believed and still believe that India was the fittest nation to enforce non-violent action for regaining her freedom. In spite of signs to the contrary, I have the hope that the whole mass of people, who are more than the Congress, will respond only to non-violent action. They are the readiest of all the nations of the earth for such action. But when a case for immediate application of the remedy presented itself before me, I could not restrain myself from suggesting it to the Czechs or their acceptance.

It is, however, open to the great Powers to take it up any day and cover themselves with glory and earn the eternal gratitude of posterity. If they or any of them could shed the fear of destruction, if they disarmed themselves, they will automatically help the rest to regain their

sanity. But, then, these great Powers have to give up imperialistic ambitions and exploitation of the so-called uncivilized or semi-civilized nations of the earth, and revise their mode of life. It means a complete revolution. Great nations can hardly be expected in the ordinary course to move spontaneously in a direction the reverse of the one they have followed, and according to their notion of value, from victory to victory. But miracles have happened before and may happen even in this very prosaic age. Who can dare limit God's power of undoing wrong? One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending doom, save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications. Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are to-day nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals, and never by nations which are composed of individuals .

—*Harijan*: Nov. 12, 1938.

## XII

### THE JEWS

*"I am convinced that if some one with courage and vision can arise among them (the Jews) to lead them into non-violent action, the winter of their despair can in the twinkling of an eye be turned into the summer of hope."*

Several letters have been received by me asking me to declare my views about the Arab-Jew question in Palestine, and the persecution of the Jews in Germany. It is not without hesitation that I venture to offer my views on this very difficult question.

My sympathies are all with the Jews. I have known them intimately in South Africa. Some of them became life-long companions. Through these friends I came to learn much of their age-long persecution. They have been the untouchables of Christianity. The parallel between their treatment by Christians and the treatment of untouchables by Hindus is very close. Religious sanction has been invoked in both cases for the justification of the inhuman treatment meted out to them. Apart from the friendships, therefore, there is the more common universal reason for my sympathy for the Jews.

But the sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for the national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the *Bible* and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other peoples of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood?

Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English, or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine to-day cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. Surely, it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews, partly or wholly, as their national home.

The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred. The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French. If the Jews

have no home but Palestine, will they relish the idea of being forced to leave the other parts of the world in which they are settled? Or, do they want a double home where they can remain at will? This cry for the national home affords a colourable justification for the German expulsion of the Jews.

But the German persecution of the Jews seems to have no parallel in history. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hitler seems to have gone. And he is doing it with religious zeal. For, he is propounding a new religion of exclusive and militant nationalism, in the name of which any inhumanity becomes an act of humanity to be rewarded here and hereafter. The crime of an obviously mad but intrepid youth is being visited upon his whole race with unbelievable ferocity. If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of and for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war. A discussion of the *pros* and *cons* of such a war is, therefore, outside my horizon or province.

But if there can be no war against Germany, even for such a crime as is being committed against the Jews, surely there can be no alliance with Germany. How can there be alliance between a nation which claims to stand for justice and democracy and one which is the declared enemy of both? Or, is England drifting towards armed dictatorship and all it means?

Germany is showing to the world how efficiently violence can be worked, when it is not hampered by any hypocrisy or weakness masquerading as humanitarianism. It is also showing how hideous, terrible and terrifying it looks in its nakedness.

Can the Jews resist this organized and shameless persecution? Is there a way to preserve their self-respect, and not to feel helpless, neglected and forlorn? I submit there is. No person who has faith in a living God need feel helpless or forlorn. Jehovah of the Jews is a God more



personal than the God of the Christians, the Mussalmans or the Hindus, though, as a matter of fact, in essence, He is common to all and one without a second and beyond description. But as the Jews attribute personality to God and believe that He rules every action of theirs, they ought not to feel helpless. If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German might, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing this, I should not wait for the fellow Jews to join me in civil resistance, but would have confidence that in the end the rest were bound to follow my example. If one Jew or all the Jews were to accept the prescription here offered, he or they cannot be worse off than now. And suffering voluntarily undergone will bring them an inner strength and joy, which no number of resolutions of sympathy passed in the world outside Germany can. Indeed, even if Britain, France and America were to declare hostilities against Germany, they can bring no inner joy, no inner strength. The calculated violence of Hitler may even result in a general massacre of the Jews by way of his first answer to the declaration of such hostilities. But if the Jewish mind could be prepared for voluntary suffering, even the massacre I have imagined could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance of the race even at the hands of the tyrant. For to the God-fearing, death has no terror. It is a joyful sleep to be followed by a waking that would be all the more refreshing for the long sleep.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that it is easier for the Jews than for the Czechs to follow my prescription. And they have in the Indian *Satyagraha* campaign in South Africa an exact parallel. There the Indians occupied precisely the same place that the Jews occupy in Germany. The persecution had also a religious tinge. President Kruger used to say that the white Christians were

the chosen of God, and Indians were inferior beings created to serve the Whites. A fundamental clause in the Transvaal constitution was that there should be no equality between the Whites and coloured races, including Asiatics. There, too, the Indians were consigned to ghettos, described as locations. The other disabilities were almost of the same type as those of the Jews in Germany. The Indians, a mere handful, resorted to *Satyagraha* without any backing from the world outside or the Indian Government. Indeed, the British officials tried to dissuade the *Satyagrahis* from their contemplated step. World opinion and the Indian Government came to their aid after eight years of fighting. And that, too, was by the way of diplomatic pressure, not of a threat of war.

But the Jews of Germany can offer *Satyagraha* under infinitely better auspices than the Indians of South Africa. The Jews are a compact, homogenous community in Germany. They are far more gifted than the Indians of South Africa. And they have organized world opinion behind them. I am convinced that if someone with courage and vision can arise among them to lead them in non-violent action, the winter of their despair can in the twinkling of an eye be turned into the summer of hope. And what has to-day become a degrading man-hunt can be turned into a calm and determined stand, offered by un-armed men and women possessing the strength of suffering given to them by Jehovah. It will be, then, a truly religious resistance offered against the godless fury of dehumanized man. The German Jews will score a lasting victory over the German gentiles in the sense that they will have converted the latter to an appreciation of human dignity. They will have rendered service to fellow-Germans and proved their title to be the real Germans as against those who are to-day dragging, however unknowingly, the German name into the mire.

And now a word to the Jews in Palestine. I have no doubt that they are going about it the wrong way. The

Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. They can settle in Palestine only by the good-will of the Arabs. They should seek to convert the Arab heart. The same God rules the Arab heart who rules the Jewish heart. They can offer *Satyagraha* in front of the Arabs, and offer themselves to be shot or thrown into the Dead Sea without raising a little finger against them. They will find the world opinion in their favour in their religious aspiration. There are hundreds of ways of reasoning with the Arabs, if they will only discard the help of the British bayonet. As it is, they are co-sharers with the British in despoiling a people who have done no wrong to them.

I am not defending the Arab excesses. I wish they had chosen the way of non-violence in resisting what they rightly regarded as an unwarrantable encroachment upon their country. But according to the accepted canons of right and wrong, nothing can be said against the Arab resistance in the face of overwhelming odds.

Let the Jews, who claim to be the chosen race, prove their title by choosing the way of non-violence for vindicating their position on earth. Every country is their home, including Palestine, not by aggression but by loving service. A Jewish friend has sent me a book called *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization* by Cecil Roth. It gives a record of what the Jews have done to enrich the world's literature, art, music, drama, science, medicine, agriculture, etc. Given the will, the Jew can refuse to be treated as the outcaste of the West, to be despised or patronized. He can command the attention and respect of the world by being man, the chosen creation of God, instead of being man who is fast sinking to the brute and forsaken by God.

They can add to their many contributions the surpassing contribution of non-violent action.

—*Harijan*: Nov. 26, 1938.

### XIII

#### WHAT TO DO WITH GANGSTER NATIONS ?

*"Whilst I would understand the use of force by those who have not the spirit of non-violence in them, I would have those who know non-violence to throw their whole weight in demonstrating that even gangsterism has to be met by non-violence."*

Q. What to do with 'gangster' nations, if I may use the expression frequently used? There was individual gangsterism in America. It has been put down by strong police measures both local and national. Could not we do something similar for gangsterism between nations, as instanced in Manchuria—the nefarious use of the opium, in Abyssinia, in Spain, in the sudden seizure of Austria, and then in the case of Czechoslovakia. Now, in this connection, let me say, I was deeply impressed by what you wrote on the Czechoslovakian crisis and on the Jewish question. Can we bring something like international police into being?

A. If the best mind of the world has not imbibed the spirit of non-violence, they would have to meet gangsterism in the orthodox way. But that would only show that we have not got far beyond the Law of the Jungle, that we have not yet learnt to appreciate the heritage that God has given us, that in spite of the teaching of Christianity which is 1900 years old, and of Hinduism and Buddhism which are older, and even of Islam (if I have read it aright), we have not made much headway as

human beings. But, whilst I would understand the use of force by those who have not the spirit of non-violence in them, I would have those who know non-violence to throw their whole weight in demonstrating that even gangsterism has to be met by non-violence. For, ultimately, force, however justifiably used, will lead us into the same morass as the force of Hitler and Mussolini. There will be just a difference of degree. You and I who believe in non-violence must use it at the critical moment. We may not despair of touching the heart even of gangsters, even if, for the moment, we may seem to be striking our heads against a blind wall.

—*Harijan*: Dec. 10, 1938.

#### XIV

#### REPLY TO GERMAN CRITICS

*"If the Jews, instead of being helplessly and of necessity non-violent, adopt active non-violence i.e., fellow-feeling for the Gentile Germans deliberately, they cannot do any harm to the Germans, and I am as certain as I am dictating these lines that the stoniest German heart will melt."*

I WAS NOT unprepared for the exhibition of wrath from Germany over my article about the German treatment of the Jews. I have myself admitted my ignorance of European politics. But in order to commend my prescription to the Jews for the removal of their many ills, I did not need to have an accurate knowledge of European politics. The main facts about the atrocities are beyond dispute. When the anger over my writing has subsided and comparative calmness has returned, the most wrathful

German will find that underlying my writing there was friendliness towards Germany, never any ill-will.

Have I not repeatedly said that active non-violence is unadulterated love—fellow-feeling? And if the Jews, instead of being helplessly and of necessity non-violent, adopt active non-violence *i.e.* fellow-feeling for the Gentile Germans deliberately, they cannot do any harm to the Germans, and I am as certain as I am dictating these lines that the stoniest German heart will melt. Great as have been the Jewish contributions to the world's progress, this supreme act of theirs will be their greatest contribution and war will be a thing of the past.

It passes comprehension why any German should be angry over my utterly innocuous writing. Of course, German critics, as others, might have ridiculed it by saying that it was a visionary's effort doomed to fail. I, therefore, welcome this wrath, though wholly unmerited, against my writing. Has my writing gone home? Has the writer felt that my remedy was after all not so ludicrous as it may appear, but that it was eminently practical if only the beauty of suffering without retaliation was realized?

To say that my writing has rendered neither myself, my movement, nor German-Indian relations, any service, is surely irrelevant, if not also unworthy, implying as it does a threat; and I should rank myself a coward if, for fear of my country or myself or Indo-German relations being harmed, I hesitated to give what I felt in the innermost recesses of my heart to be cent per cent sound advice.

The Berlin writer has surely enunciated a novel doctrine that people outside Germany may not criticize German action, even from friendliest motives. For my part, I would certainly welcome the interesting things that Germans or other outsiders may unearth about Indians. I do not need to speak for the British. But if I know the British people at all, they, too, welcome outside criticism, when it is well-informed and free from malice. In this age, when distances have been obliterated, no nation can

afford to imitate the fabled frog in the well. Sometimes it is refreshing to see ourselves as others see us. If, therefore, the German critics happen to see this reply, I hope that they will not only revise their opinion about my writing, but will also realize the value of outside criticism.

—*Harijan*: Dec. 17, 1938.

## XV

### SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

*"I make bold to say that if the Jews can summon to their aid the soul power that comes only from non-violence, Herr Hitler will bow before the courage which he has never yet experienced in any large measure in his dealings with men, and which, when it is exhibited, he will own is infinitely superior to that shown by his best Storm Troopers."*

FRIENDS HAVE SENT me two newspaper cuttings criticizing my appeal to the Jews. The two critics suggest that in presenting non-violence to the Jews as a remedy against the wrong done to them I have suggested nothing new, and that they have been practising non-violence for the past 2000 years. Obviously, so far as these critics are concerned, I did not make my meaning clear. The Jews, so far as I know, have never practised non-violence as an article of faith, or even as a deliberate policy. Indeed, it is a stigma against them that their ancestors crucified Jesus. Are they not supposed to believe in an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth? Have they no violence in their hearts for their oppressors? Do they not want the so-called Democratic Powers to punish Germany for her persecution, and to deliver them from oppression? If they do, there

is no non-violence in their hearts. Their non-violence, if it may be so called, is of the helpless and the weak.

What I have pleaded for is renunciation of violence of the heart, and consequent active exercise of the force generated by the great renunciation. One of the critics says that favourable public opinion is necessary for the working of non-violence. The writer is evidently thinking of passive resistance conceived as a weapon of the weak. I have drawn a distinction between passive resistance of the weak and active non-violent resistance of the strong. The latter can and does work in the teeth of the fiercest opposition. But it ends in evoking the widest public sympathy. Sufferings of the non-violent have been known to melt the stoniest hearts. I make bold to say that if the Jews can summon to their aid the soul power that comes only from non-violence, Herr Hitler will bow before the courage which he has never yet experienced in any large measure in his dealings with men, and which, when it is exhibited, he will own is infinitely superior to that shown by his best Storm Troopers. The exhibition of such courage is only possible for those who have a living faith in the God of Truth and Non-violence, *i.e.* Love.

Of course, the critics can reasonably argue that the non-violence pictured by me is not possible for masses of mankind, it is possible only for the very few highly developed persons. I have combated that view and suggested that, given proper training and proper generalship, non-violence can be practised by masses of mankind.

I see, however, that my remarks are being misunderstood to mean that because I advise non-violent resistance by the persecuted Jews, by inference I expect or would advise non-interference by the Democratic Powers on behalf of the Jews. I hardly need to answer this fear. Surely, there is no danger of the great Powers refraining from action because of anything I have said. They will, they are bound to, do all they can to free the Jews from the inhuman persecution. My appeal has force in the face of the



fact that the Great Powers feel unable to help the Jews in an effective manner. Therefore it is that I have offered the prescription, which I know to be infallible when taken in the right manner.

The most relevant criticism, however, which I have received is this: How do I expect the Jews to accept my prescription when I know that India, where I am myself working, where I call myself the self-appointed general, has not accepted it *in toto*. My answer is. 'Blessed are they that expect nothing.' I belong to the category of the blessed, in this case at least. Having got the prescription, and being sure of its efficiency, I felt that I would be wrong if I did not draw attention to it when I saw cases where it could be effectively applied.

Hitherto, I have refused to deal with European politics. My general position still remains the same. I presented my remedy almost in suppressed tones in the case of Abyssinia. The cases of the Czechs and the Jews became more vivid to me than the case of the Abyssinians. And I could not restrain myself from writing. Perhaps, Dr. Mott was right when he said to me the other day that I must write more and more articles like those on the Czechs and the Jews, if only because they must aid me in the Indian struggle. He said that the West was never more prepared than now to listen to the message of non-violence.

—*Harijan*: Dec. 17, 1938.

## XVI

### NON-VIOLENCE AND WORLD CRISIS

*"I have an implicit faith—a faith that today burns brighter than ever—that mankind can only be saved through non-violence, which is the central teaching of the Bible as I have understood the Bible."*

IN MY OPINION non-violence is not passivity in any shape or form. Non-violence, as I understand it, is the activist force in the world. Therefore, whether it is materialism or anything else, if non-violence does not provide an effective antidote, it is not the active force of my conception. Or, to put it conversely, if you bring me some conundrums that I cannot answer, I would say my non-violence is still defective. Non-violence is the supreme law. During my half a century of experience, I have not yet come across a situation when I had to say that I was helpless, that I had no remedy in terms of non-violence.

Take the question of the Jews on which I have written. No Jew need feel helpless if he takes to the non-violent way. A friend has written me a letter, objecting that in that article I have assumed that the Jews have been violent. It is true that the Jews have not been actively violent in their own persons. But they called down upon the Germans the curses of mankind, and they wanted America and England to fight Germany on their behalf.\* If I hit my adversary, that is of course violence, but to be truly non-violent I must love him and pray for him, even when he hits me. The Jews have not been actively non-violent or, in spite of the misdeeds of the dictators, they would say: "We shall suffer at their hand; they knew no better. But we shall suffer not in the manner in which they want us to suffer." If even one Jew acted thus, he would save his self-respect and leave an example which, if it became infectious, would save the whole of Jewry and leave a rich heritage to mankind besides.

What about China, you will ask. The Chinese have no designs upon other people. They have no desire for territory. True, perhaps, China is not ready for such aggression; perhaps, what looks like her pacifism is only indolence. In any case, China's is not active non-violence. Her putting up a valiant defence against Japan is proof

\* This observation was subsequently withdrawn by Gandhiji

—The Editor.

enough that China was never intentionally non-violent. That she is on the defensive is no answer in terms of non-violence. Therefore, when the time for testing her active non-violence came, she failed in the test. This is no criticism of China. I wish the Chinese success. According to the accepted standards, her behaviour is strictly correct. But when the position is examined in terms of non-violence, I must say it is unbecoming for a nation of 400 millions, a nation as cultured as Japan, to repel Japanese aggression by resorting to Japan's own methods. If the Chinese had non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery for destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan: "Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining two hundred millions won't bend their knee to you." If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave.

It has been objected, however, that non-violence is all right in the case of the Jews because there is personal contact between the individual and his persecutors, but in China, Japan comes with its long-range guns and aeroplanes. The person who rains death from above has never any chance of even knowing who and how many he has killed. How can non-violence combat aerial warfare, seeing that there are no personal contacts? The reply to this is that behind the death-dealing bomb there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still, is the human heart that sets the hand in motion. And at the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism, if applied in a sufficient measure, will produce the desired result, namely, bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing a people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, nor retaliate with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism. If sufficient food is given to the tyrant, a time will come when he will have had more than surfeit. If all the mice in the world held conference

together and resolved that they would no more fear the cat but all run into her mouth, the mice would live. I have actually seen a cat play with a mouse. She did not kill it outright but held it between her jaws, then released it, and again pounced upon it as soon as it made an effort to escape. In the end, the mouse died out of sheer fright. The cat would have derived no sport if the mouse had not tried to run away. I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand, and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved on the other, ultimately made me ashamed of myself and cured me of my stupidity in thinking that I was born to rule over her, and in the end she became my teacher in non-violence. And what I did in South Africa was but an extension of the rule of *Satyagraha* which she unwillingly practised in her own person.

Q. You do not know Hitler and Mussolini. They are incapable of any kind of moral response. They have no conscience and they have made themselves impervious to world opinion. Would it not be playing into the hands of these dictators if, for instance, the Czechs following your advice confronted them with non-violence? Seeing that dictatorships are unmoral by definition, would the law of moral conversion hold good in their case?"

A. Your argument presupposes that the dictators like Mussolini or Hitler are beyond redemption. But belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and, therefore, unfailingly responds to the advances of love. It should be remembered that they have up to now always found ready response to the violence that they have used. Within their experience, they have not come across organized non-violent resistance on an appreciable scale, if at all. Therefore, it is not only highly likely, but I hold it to be inevitable, that they would recognize the superiority of non-violent resistance

over any display of violence that they may be capable of putting forth. Moreover, the non-violent technique that I have presented to the Czechs does not depend for its success on the goodwill of the dictators; for, a non-violent resister depends upon the unfailing assistance of God which sustains him throughout difficulties which would otherwise be considered insurmountable. His faith makes him indomitable.

Suppose, they (dictators) come and occupy mines, factories and all sources of natural wealth belonging to the Czechs, then the following results can take place: (1) The Czechs may be annihilated for disobedience to orders. That would be a glorious victory for the Czechs and the beginning of the fall of Germany. (2) The Czechs might become demoralized in the presence of overwhelming force. This is a result common in all struggles, but if demoralization does take place, it would not be on account of non-violence, but it would be due to absence or inadequacy of non-violence. (3) The third thing that can take place, is that Germany might use her new possessions for occupation by her surplus population. This, again, could not be avoided by offering violent resistance, for we have assumed that violent resistance is out of the question. Thus, non-violent resistance is the best method under all conceivable circumstances.

Q. What can I, as a Christian, do to contribute to international peace? How can international anarchy be broken down and non-violence made effective for establishing peace? Subject nations apart, how can nations at the top be made to disarm themselves?

A. You, as a Christian, can make an effective contribution by non-violent action even though it may cost you your all. Peace will never come until the Great Powers courageously decide to disarm themselves. It seems to me that recent events must force that belief on the Great Powers. I have an implicit faith—a faith that to-day burns

brighter than ever, after half a century's experience of unbroken practice of non-violence—that mankind can only be saved through non-violence which is the central teaching of the *Bible* as I have understood the *Bible*.

—*Harijan*: Dec. 24, 1938.

## XVII

### IS NON-VIOLENCE INEFFECTIVE ?

*"Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, wordly and temporal."*

IN DEALING WITH my answer to the criticism that the Jews had been non-violent for 2000 years, *The Statesman* says in the course of an editorial:

"The whole world has heard of Pastor Niemoeller and the sufferings of the Lutheran Church; here many Pastors and individual Christians bore themselves bravely before People's Courts, violence and threats; without retaliation they bore noble witness to the Truth. And what change of heart is there in Germany? Buried in prisons and concentration camps are to-day, and have been for five years, members of the Bible Searchers' Leagues who rejected Nazi militarism as conflicting with Christ's Gospel of Peace. And how many Germans know of them, or, if they know, do anything about it?

"Non-violence, whether of the weak or of the strong, seems, except in very special conditions, rather

a personal than a social gospel. A man's salvation may be left to himself; politicians are concerned with causes, creeds and minorities. It is suggested by Mr. Gandhi that Herr Hitler would bow before a courage 'infinitely superior to that shown by his own Storm Troopers'. If that were so, one would have supposed that he would have paid tribute to such men as Herr Von Ossietzky. Courage to a Nazi, however, seems a virtue only when displayed by his own supporters; elsewhere it becomes 'the impudent provocation of Jewish-Marxist *canaille*'. Mr. Gandhi has produced his prescription in view of the inability of the Great Powers effectively to move in the matter, an inability we all deplore and would see remedied. His sympathy may do much for the comfort of the Jews, but seems likely to do less for their enlargement. Christ is the supreme example of non-violence, and the indignities heaped upon Him at His tortured death proved once and for all that in a worldly and temporal sense it can fail hopelessly."

I do not think that sufferings of Pastor Niemoeller and others have been in vain. They have preserved their self-respect intact. They have proved that their faith was equal to any suffering. That they have not proved sufficient for melting Herr Hitler's heart merely shows that it is made of a harder material than stone. But the hardest metal yields to sufficient heat. Even so must the hardest heart melt before sufficiency of the heat of non-violence. And there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to generate heat.

Every action is a resultant of a multitude of forces, even of a contrary nature. There is no waste of energy. So we learn in the books on mechanics. This is equally true of human actions. The difference is that in the one case we generally know the forces at work, and when we do, we

can mathematically foretell the resultant. In the case of human actions, they result from a concurrence of forces of most of which we have no knowledge. But our ignorance must not be made to serve the cause of disbelief in the power of these forces. Rather is our ignorance a cause for greater faith. And non-violence being the mightiest force in the world, and also the most elusive in its working, demands the greatest exercise of faith. Even as we believe in God in faith, so have we to believe in non-violence in faith.

Herr Hitler is but one man enjoying no more than the average span of life. He would be a spent force, if he had not the backing of his people. I do not despair of his responding to human suffering even though caused by him. But I must refuse to believe that the Germans as a nation have no heart or markedly less than the other nations of the earth. They will, some day or other, rebel against their own adored hero, if he does not wake up sometimes. And when he or they do, we shall find that the sufferings of the Pastor and his fellow-workers had not a little to do with the awakening.

An armed conflict may bring disaster to German arms; it cannot change the German heart even as the last defeat did not. It produced a Hitler vowed to wreak vengeance on the victors. And what a vengeance it is! My answer, therefore, must be the answer that Stephenson gave to his fellow-workers, who had despaired of ever filling the deep pit that made the first railway possible. He asked his co-workers of little faith to have more faith and go on filling the pit. It was not bottomless, it must be filled. Even so, I do not despair because Herr Hitler's or the German heart has not yet melted. On the contrary, I plead for more suffering and still more till the melting has become visible to the naked eye. And even as the Pastor has covered himself with glory, a single Jew bravely standing up and refusing to bow to Hitler's decrees will cover himself with glory and lead the way to the deliverance of the fellow-Jews.



I hold that non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely, society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.

I was unprepared to find the view expressed by *The Statesman* writer that the example of Christ proved once and for all that in a worldly and temporal sense it can fail hopelessly. Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal. And I know that there are hundreds of Christians who believe likewise. Jesus lived and died in vain if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal Law of Love.

—*Harijan*: Jan. 7, 1939.

#### XVIII

### THE JEWISH QUESTION

*"I wish with all my heart that somehow or other the persecution of the Jews in Germany will end and that the question in Palestine will be settled to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned."*

THE MANAGING EDITOR of the *Jewish Frontier*, published at 275-Seventh Avenue, New York City, was good enough to send me a copy of the March number of the magazine with the request that I should deal with its reply to my article on the Jews in Germany and Palestine. The reply is very ably written. I wish I had space for reproducing the whole of it.

Let me say that I did not write the article as a critic.

I wrote it at the pressing request of Jewish friends and correspondents. As I decided to write, I could not do so in any other manner.

But I did not entertain the hope when I wrote it that the Jews would be at once converted to my view. I should have been satisfied if even one Jew had been fully convinced and converted.

Nor did I write the article only for to-day. I flatter myself with the belief that some of my writings will survive me and will be of service to the causes for which they have been written. I have no sense of disappointment that my writing had not, to my knowledge, converted a single Jew.

Having read the reply more than once, I must say that I see no reason to change the opinion I expressed in my article. It is highly probable that, as the writer says, 'a Jewish Gandhi in Germany, should one arise, could function for about five minutes and would be promptly taken to the guillotine.' But that will not disprove my case or shake my belief in the efficacy of *ahimsa*. I can conceive the necessity of the immolation of hundreds, if not thousands, to appease the hunger of dictators who have no belief in *ahimsa*. Indeed, the maxim is that *ahimsa* is the most efficacious in front of the greatest *himsa*. Its quality is really tested only in such cases. Sufferers need not see the result during their life-time. They must have faith that if their cult survives, the result is a certainty. The method of violence gives no greater guarantee than that of non-violence. It gives infinitely less. For, the faith of the votary of *ahimsa* is lacking.

The writer contends that I approached the Jewish problem "without that fundamental earnestness and passionate search for Truth which are a characteristic of his usual treatment of problems." All I can say is that, to my knowledge, there was lack neither of earnestness nor of passion for Truth when I wrote the article. The second charge of the writer is more serious. He thinks that my

zeal for Hindu-Muslim unity made me partial to the Arab presentation of the case, especially as that side was naturally emphasized in India. I have often said that I would not sell truth for the sake of India's deliverance. Much less would I do so for winning Muslim friendship. The writer thinks that I am wrong on the Jewish question, as I was wrong on the *Khilafat* question. Even at this distance of time, I have no regret whatsoever for having taken up the *Khilafat* cause. I know that my persistence does not prove the correctness of my attitude. Only it is necessary for everyone concerned to know where I stand to-day about my action in 1919-20.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that this writing of mine will give no satisfaction either to the Editor of *Jewish Frontier* or to my many Jewish friends. Nevertheless, I wish with all my heart that somehow or other the persecution of the Jews in Germany will end, and that the question in Palestine will be settled to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

—*Harijan*: May 27, 1939.

## XIX

### MESSAGE TO JAPAN

*"I have no message to give you but this that you must be true to your heritage. The message is 2,500 years old, but it has not yet been truly lived. But what are 2,500 years? They are but a speck in the cycle of time. The full flower of non-violence, which seems to be withering away, has yet to come to full bloom."*

[Mr. Takaoka, Member of the Japanese Parliament who was

on a visit to Gandhiji, asked as to how the unity between Japan and India could be possible. In replying to him, Gandhiji said:]

"IT CAN BE POSSIBLE if Japan ceases to throw its greedy eyes on India. No doubt you do not bring your army to India, but you employ your matchless skill, and your ability to hide the truth and your knowledge of the weaknesses of Indians, in order to flood India with your goods which are often flimsy. You have copied the rulers of India in their methods of exploitation and gone even one better. Now, from the Japanese stand-point, you cannot afford to lose the millions of rupees that you get from India. And, if you cannot get them voluntarily, you will be quite capable of doing so by force of arms. But that would not be the way of bringing Japan and India together. What can bring them together is a moral bond based on mutual friendship.

"But there is no basis for that friendship to-day. Take your art. I like it. I read a fascinating account of Japan and Japanese life by Edwin Arnold many years ago. That picture has remained with me. I want to assimilate all your good points, but, unfortunately, no one comes here to give us the good things of Japan. You believe only in dumping your goods on us. How can I take a single yard of Japanese cloth, however fine and artistic it may be? It is as poison to us, for it means starvation for the poor people of India. You have left the West far behind in diplomacy, in skill, in cheap manufactures, in armed warfare, in exploitation. How, then, can there be friendship between you and us, so long as you see nothing wrong in exploitation?"

[ Mr. Takaoka wondered if Gandhiji could give a message to the new party in Japan, which stands for Asia for the Asiatics.

"I do not subscribe to the doctrine of 'Asia for the Asiatics', if it is meant as an anti-European combination. How can we have Asia for the Asiatics, unless we are content to let Asia remain a frog in the well? But Asia cannot afford to remain a frog in the well. It has a

message for the whole world, if it will only live up to it. There is the imprint of Buddhistic influence on the whole of Asia, which includes India, China, Ceylon and the Malaya States. I said to the Burmese and the Ceylonese that they were Buddhist in name; India was Buddhist in reality. I would say the same thing to China and Japan. But, for Asia to be not for Asia but the whole world, it has to re-learn the message of Buddha and deliver it to the world. To-day, it is being denied everywhere. In Burma, every Buddhist monk is being dreaded by the Muslims. But why should anyone who is a true Buddhist be dreaded by anyone?

"You will, therefore, see that I have no message to give you but this, that you must be true to your ancient heritage. The message is 2,500 years old, but it has not yet been truly lived. But what are 2,500 years? They are but a speck in the cycle of time. The full flower of non-violence, which seems to be withering away, has yet to come to full bloom."

—*Harijan* Dec. 24, 1938.

## XX

### INDIA'S MESSAGE

*"India is saturated with that spirit (of non-violence). It has not demonstrated it to the extent that you can go to America as being witnesses of that spirit. But you can truthfully say that India is making a desperate effort to live upto that great ideal. If there is not this message, there is no other message that India can give."*

[In reply to a question asked by a group of young American teachers from Ewing Christian College and the Agricultural Institute,

Allahabad, who were returning to America and paid Gandhiji a visit, as to how he, an old and experienced leader, would advise young men "to throw away their lives" in the service of humanity, Gandhiji said:]

THE QUESTION is not rightly put. You don't throw away your lives when you take up the weapon of *satyagraha*. But you prepare yourself to face without retaliation the gravest danger and provocation. It gives you a chance to surrender your life for the cause when the time comes. To be able to do so non-violently requires previous training. If you are a believer in the orthodox method, you go and train yourselves as soldiers. It is the same with non-violence. You have to alter your whole mode of life and work for it in peace time, just as much as in the time of war. It is, no doubt, a difficult job. You have to put your whole soul into it; and if you are sincere your example will affect the lives of other people around you. America is today exploiting the so-called weaker nations of the world along with other Powers. It has become the richest country in the world, not a thing to be proud of when we come to think of the means by which she has become rich. Again, to protect these riches, you need the assistance of violence. You must be prepared to give up these riches. Therefore, if you really mean to give up violence, you will say: "We shall have nothing to do with the spoils of violence, and if, as a result, America ceases to be rich, we do not mind". You will, then, be qualified to offer a spotless sacrifice. That is the meaning of preparation. The occasion for making the extreme sacrifice may not come, if you as a nation have fully learnt to live for peace. It is much more difficult to live for non-violence than to die for it.

[To an inquiry, if non-violence, as enunciated by him, had a positive quality, Gandhiji replied:]

If I had used the word 'love', which non-violence is in essence, you would not have asked this question. But, per-

haps, 'love' does not express my meaning fully. The nearest word is 'charity'. We love our friends and our equals. But the reaction that a ruthless dictator sets up in us is either that of awe or pity, according respectively as we react to him violently or non-violently. Non-violence knows no fear. If I am truly non-violent, I would pity the dictator and say to myself: "He does not know what a human being should be. One day he will know better when he is confronted by a people who do not stand in awe of him, who will neither submit nor cringe to him, nor bear any grudge against him for whatever he may do. Germans are today doing what they are doing because all the other nations stand in awe of them. None of them can go to Hitler with clean hands."

Q. What is the place of Christian missions in the new India that is being built up today? What can they do to help in this great task?

A. To show appreciation of what India is and is doing. Uptil now, they have come as teachers and preachers with queer notions about India and India's great religions. We have been described as a nation of superstitious heathens, knowing nothing, denying God. We are a brood of Satan, as Murdoch would say. Did not Bishop Heber, in his well-known hymn *From Greenland's Icy Mountains*, describe India as a country where "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile"? To me, this is a negation of the spirit of Christ. My personal view, therefore, is that if you feel that India has a message to give to the world, that India's religions, too, are true, though like all religions imperfect for having percolated through imperfect human agency, and you come as fellow-helpers and fellow-seekers, there is a place for you here. But if you come as preachers of the *True Gospel* to a people who are wandering in darkness, so far as I am concerned, you can have no place. You may impose yourselves upon us.

Q. What is India's real message to the world?

A. Non-violence. India is saturated with that spirit. It has not demonstrated it to the extent that you can go to America as living witnesses of that spirit. But, you can truthfully say that India is making a desperate effort to live up to that great ideal. If there is not this message, there is no other message that India can give. Say what you may, the fact stands out that here you have a whole sub-continent that has decided for itself that there is no freedom for it except through non-violence. No other country has made that attempt even. I have not been able to influence other people even to the extent of believing that non-violence is worth trying. There is, of course, a growing body of European opinion that has begun to appreciate the possibilities of the weapon of non-violence. But I want the sympathy of the whole world for India, if she can get it while she is making this unique experiment. You can, however, be witnesses to the attempt only if you really feel that we are making an honest effort to come up to the ideal of non-violence, and that all we are doing is not fraud. If your conviction is enlightened and deep enough, it will set up a ferment working in the minds of your people.

—*Harijan*: Jan. 7, 1939.

## XXI

### TALK WITH CHINESE FRIENDS

*"If even a few of you took to non-violence, they would stand forth as living monuments of Chinese culture and morals. And, then, even if China were overwhelmed on the battlefield, it would be well with China in the end."*

[A group of Chinese friends, who visited Gandhiji, pathetically



complained to him about the moral, material and cultural destruction to which the Chinese people were being systematically subjected by the Japanese, and asked for his message. Gandhiji replied:]

I WAS ONCE asked by a Chinese friend from Shantiniketan to give a message to the Chinese people. I had to ask him to excuse me. I gave him my reasons. If I merely said I sympathized with the Chinese in their struggle, it would be not of much value as coming from me. I should love to be able to say to the Chinese definitely that their salvation lay only through non-violent technique. But then it is not for a person like me, who is outside the fight, to say to a people who are engaged in a life and death struggle: 'Not this way, but that.' They would not be ready to take up the new method, and they would be unsettled in the old. My interference would only shake them and confuse their minds.

But whilst I have no 'message' to send to the Chinese people who are engaged in fighting, I have no hesitation in presenting my view-point to you. I was almost going to ask you as to what you meant by being culturally ruined. I should be sorry to learn that Chinese culture resided in brick and mortar or in huge tomes which the moth can eat. A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people. Chinese culture is Chinese only to the extent that it has become part and parcel of Chinese life. Your saying, therefore, that your culture and your morals are in danger of being destroyed, leads one to think that the reform movement in your country was only skin-deep. Gambling had not disappeared from the people's hearts. It was kept down not by the tone set by society, but by the penalty of the law. The heart continued to gamble. Japan is, of course, to blame and must be blamed for what it has done or is doing. But, then, Japan is just now like the wolf whose business it is to make short work of the sheep. Blaming the wolf would not help the sheep much. The sheep must learn not to fall into the clutches of the wolf.

If even a few of you took to non-violence, they would stand forth as living monuments of Chinese culture and morals. And, then, even if China were overwhelmed on the battlefield, it would at the same time be receiving a message which contains a promise of hope and deliverance. Japan cannot force drugs down unwilling throats at the point of the bayonet. It can only set up temptations. You cannot teach people to resist these temptations by replying to Japanese force by force. Whatever else force may or may not be able to achieve, it cannot safeguard Chinese morals or save Chinese culture.

If you feel the truth of my remarks, you will become a living message to China. You will then tell the Chinese people: "No matter what material destruction Japan inflicts, it cannot bring about China's cultural destruction. Our people must be sufficiently educated and warned to resist all the temptations that Japan may devise. Monuments and cities may be razed to the ground. They are but a passing show, that is going one day to be claimed by time as its own. If they are destroyed by the Japanese, it will only be a morsel taken out of time's mouth. The Japanese cannot corrupt our soul. If the soul of China is injured, it will not be by Japan."

Q. Is it not necessary that individuals should practise non-violence first in their own person, in their relations with other individuals?

A. It would be a delusion to think otherwise. If one does not practise non-violence in one's personal relations with others and hopes to use it in bigger affairs, one is vastly mistaken. Non-violence, like charity, must begin at home. But if it is necessary for the individual to be trained in non-violence, it is even more necessary for the nation to be trained likewise. One cannot be non-violent in one's own circle and violent outside it. Or else, one is not truly non-violent even in one's own circle; often the non-violence is only in appearance. It is only when you meet with

resistance, as for instance, when a thief or a murderer appears, that your non-violence is put on its trial. You either try or should try to oppose the thief with his own weapons, or you try to disarm him by love. Living among decent people, your conduct may not be described as non-violent. Mutual forbearance is not non-violence. Immediately, therefore, you get the conviction that non-violence is the law of life, you have to practise it towards those who act violently towards you; and the law must apply to nations as to individuals. Training is, no doubt, necessary. And beginnings are always small. But if the conviction is there, the rest will follow.

Q. In the practice of non-violence, is there not danger of developing a 'martyrdom complex' or pride creeping in?

A. If one has that pride and egoism, there is no non-violence. Non-violence is impossible without humility. My own experience is that whenever I have acted non-violently, I have been led to it and sustained in it by the higher promptings of an Unseen Power. Through my own will, I should have miserably failed. When I first went to jail, I quailed at the prospect. I had heard terrible things about jail life. But I had faith in God's protection. Our experience was that those who went to jail in a prayerful spirit came out victorious, those who had gone in their own strength failed. There is no room for self-pitying in it either, when you say God is giving you the strength. Self-pity comes when you do a thing for which you expect recognition from others. But here there is no question of recognition.

Q. I am a firm believer in non-violence. Eight years ago, I read your *Experiments with Truth* and immediately became converted to the way of life you have there advocated. Shortly after that, I translated the book into Chinese. And, then, came the Japanese invasion. My faith in non-violence was put to a severe test and I was caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, I felt I could not

preach non-violence to my people who were never militaristic, but who now believed that resistance with force was the only way out. It was the best thing they knew, and I believe with you that 'I would rather risk the use of force a thousand times than let my people lose their manhood.' But, on the other hand, when I try to take a sympathetic attitude and try to do something helpful in such a situation, I find I am giving moral and material support, directly and indirectly, to something which is against the highest that I know. There seems to be no way out of this dilemma, because I cannot live in a vacuum and anything I do, will work one way or the other. While I can believe without reserve in non-violence in personal relationships, even though I fall far short of it, I cannot feel in the same way when I am faced with a national situation in which the great majority of the people have not even heard of the way of non-violence.

A. Your's is a difficult situation. Such difficulties have confronted me more than once. I took part on the British side in the Boer War by forming an Ambulance Corps. I did likewise at the time of what has been described as the Zulu Revolt. The third time was during the Great War. I believed in non-violence, then. My motive was wholly non-violent. That seemingly inconsistent conduct gave me strength. My example cannot be used as a precedent for others to follow. Looking back upon my conduct on those three occasions, I have no sense of remorse. I know this, too, that my non-violent strength did not suffer diminution because of those experiences. The actual work I was called upon to do was purely humanitarian, especially during the Zulu Revolt. I and my companions were privileged to nurse the wounded Zulus back to life. It is reasonable to suggest that but for our services some of them would have died. I cite this experience not to justify my participation, however indirect it was. I cite it to show that I came

through that experience with greater non-violence and with richer love for the great Zulu race. And, I had an insight into what war by white men against coloured races meant.

The lesson to be learnt from it by you is that, placed as you are in a position of hopeless minority, you may not ask your people to lay down arms unless their hearts are changed, and by laying down their arms they feel the more courageous and brave. But whilst you may not try to wean people from war, you will in your person live non-violence in all its completeness and refuse all participation in war. You will develop love for the Japanese in your hearts. You will examine yourself whether you can really love them, whether you have not some ill-will towards them for all the harm they are doing. It is not enough to love them by remembering their virtues. You must be able to love them in spite of all their misdeeds. If you have that love for the Japanese in your hearts, you will proceed to exhibit in your conduct that higher form of courage which is the hallmark of true non-violence, and which your Chinese friends will not fail to detect and recognize as such. You will not wish success to Japanese arms because you 'love' the Japanese. At the same time, you will not pray for the success of Chinese arms. It is very difficult to judge, when both sides are employing weapons of violence, which side 'deserves' to succeed. You will, therefore, pray only that the right should prevail. Whilst you will keep yourself aloof from all violence, you will not shirk danger. You will serve friend and foe alike with a reckless disregard for your life. You will rush forth, if there is an outbreak of an epidemic or a fire to be combated, and distinguish yourself by your surpassing courage and non-violent heroism. But you will refuse to call the curses of heaven upon the Japanese. If, by chance, some Japanese soldiers or airmen fall into the hands of the Chinese, and are in danger of being lynched by an infuriated Chinese mob or otherwise ill-treated, you will plead for them with your own people, and, if necessary, even protect them with your

life. You know the story of Emily Hobhouse. Though an Englishwoman, she courageously went to the Boer concentration camps. She exhorted the Boers never to lose heart, and it is said that, if she had not steeled the hearts of the Boer women as she did, the war might have taken a different turn. She was full of wrath against her own people, for whom she had not a good word to say. You would not copy her unmeasured wrath which somewhat vitiated her non-violence, but you will copy her love for the 'enemy' that made her denounce the misdeeds of her own countrymen. Your example will affect the Chinese, and might even shame some Japanese who will become bearers of your message among the Japanese.

A very slow process, you will, perhaps, say. Yes, possibly, under the existing adverse circumstances to begin with. But it will gather momentum and speed in an incalculable manner as you proceed. I am an irrepressible optimist. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world.

Q. I, a believer in non-violence, often find that I am actuated by mixed motives. So does a war general have mixed motives. Is it not possible to fight, with love for the enemy in one's heart? May we not shoot out of love?

A. We do often have mixed motives. But that would not be non-violence. There can be degrees in violence, not in non-violence. The constant effort of the votary of non-violence is to purge himself of hatred towards the so-called enemy. There is no such thing as shooting out of love in the way you suggest.

Q. Our difficulty is this. While sincerely believing in non-violence, we have not found a way of making it effective.

A. Should that present a difficulty? A person who

realizes a particular evil of his time and finds that it overwhelms him, dives deep in his own heart for inspiration, and when he gets it, he presents it to others. Meetings and group organizations are all right. They are of some help, but very little. They are like the scaffolding that an architect erects—a temporary and makeshift expedient. The thing that really matters is an invincible faith that cannot be quenched.

Faith can be developed. Only, the way it can be developed and in which it works differs from that in the case of violence. You cannot develop violence through prayer. Faith, on the other hand, cannot be developed except through prayer.

Non-violence succeeds only when we have a living faith in God. Buddha, Jesus, Mahomed—they were all warriors of peace in their own style. We have to enrich the heritage left by these world teachers. God has His own wonderful way of executing His plans and choosing His instrument. The Prophet and Abu Bakr trapped in a cave were saved from their persecutors by a spider which had woven its web across the mouth of that cave. All the world teachers, you should know, began with a zero!!

Q. Whilst we have isolated individuals who have the mind of Jesus, because they are not united, not organized, theirs remains a mere cry in the wilderness. The question that arises in my mind is: "Can love be organized?" and if so, how?

A. Organization in the orthodox sense may not be possible. But there is no bar to united non-violent action. I am trying to show by a series of experiments that it is possible. It has its own technique.

Q. If China wins the war, will she be worse off or better for her victory?

A. If China wins and copies Japanese methods, she will beat Japan hollow at her own game. But the victory of

China will not mean a new hope for the world. For, China will then be a multiple edition of Japan. But whether China wins or goes down, your line of action is clear. If China is defeated on the battlefield, your non-violence will remain undaunted and will have done its work. If China wins, you will go to the gallows in the attempt to wean China from copying Japan's methods.

—*Harijan*: Jan. 28, 1939.

## XXII

## TO SOUTH AFRICAN NEGROES

*"The different races of mankind are like different branches of a tree — once we recognize the common parent stock from which we are all sprung, we realize the basic unity of the human family, and there is no room left for enmities and unhealthy competition."*

[Rev. S. S. Tema, a Negro and a member of the African Congress had an interesting talk with Gandhiji in regard to the programme of action for the emancipation of the Negro race in the Union of South Africa:]

Q. How can my people make their Congress as successful as the Indian National Congress?

A. The Congress became successful for the simple reason that it was inaugurated by the most selfless and cultured people that could be found in that age. They made themselves the representatives of the people, and captured their imagination by reason of service and self-sacrifice. They were from the people and of the people. You have not, as far as I am aware, a band of Africans who would be content to work and live in impecuniosity. Among those who are educated, there is not that absolute



selflessness. Again, while most of your leaders are Christians, the vast mass of the Bantus and Zulus are not Christians. You have adopted European dress and manners, and have as a result become strangers in the midst of your own people. Politically, that is a disadvantage. It makes it difficult for you to reach the heart of the masses. You must not be afraid of being 'Bantuized' or feel ashamed of carrying an assagai or of going about with only a tiny clout round your loins. A Zulu or a Bantu is a well-built man and need not be ashamed of showing his body. He need not dress like you. You must become Africans once more.

[Asked about the feasibility of forming an Indo-African United Non-White Front in South Africa, Gandhiji said:]

It will be a mistake. You will be pooling together not strength, but weakness. You will best help one another by each standing on his own legs. The two cases are different. The Indians are a microscopic minority. They can never be a 'menace' to the white population. You, on the other hand, are the sons of the soil who are being robbed of your inheritance. You are bound to resist that. Yours is a far bigger issue. It ought not to be mixed up with that of the Indians. This does not preclude the establishment of the friendliest relations between the two races. The Indians can co-operate with you in a number of ways. They can help you by always acting on the square towards you. They may not put themselves in opposition to your legitimate aspirations, or run you down as 'savages' while exalting themselves as 'cultured' people, in order to secure concessions for themselves at your expense.

Q. What sort of relations would you favour between these two races?

A. The closest possible. But while I have abolished all distinction between an African and an Indian, that does not mean that I do not recognize the difference between them. The different races of mankind are like different

branches of a tree — once we recognize the common parent stock from which we are sprung, we realize the basic unity of the human family, and there is no room left for enmities and unhealthy competition.

Q. Should we adopt violence or non-violence as a means for our deliverance?

A. Certainly, non-violence under all circumstances. But you must have a living faith in it. Even when there is impenetrable darkness surrounding you, you must not abandon hope. A person who believes in non-violence believes in a living God. He cannot accept defeat. Therefore, my advice is non-violence all the time, but non-violence of the brave, not of the coward.

Q. Do you think Christianity can bring salvation to Africa?

A. Christianity, as it is known and practised to-day, cannot bring salvation to your people. It is my conviction that those who to-day call themselves Christians do not know the true message of Jesus. I witnessed some of the horrors that were perpetrated on the Zulus during the Zulu Rebellion. Because one man, Bambatta, their chief, had refused to pay his tax, the whole race was made to suffer. I was in charge of an ambulance corps. I shall never forget the lacerated backs of Zulus who had received stripes and were brought to us for nursing because no white nurse was prepared to look after them. And yet those who perpetrated all those cruelties called themselves Christians. They were 'educated,' better dressed than the Zulus, but not their moral superiors.

Q. Whenever a leader comes up in our midst, he flops down after a while. He either becomes ambitious after money or succumbs to the drink habit or some other vice and is lost to us. How shall we remedy this?

A. The problem is not peculiar to you. Your leadership has proved ineffectual because it was not sprung from the common people. If you belong to the common people,

live like them and think like them, they will make common cause with you. If I were in your place, I would not ask a single African to alter his costume and make himself peculiar. It does not add a single inch to his moral stature.

[To the question whether the South African Indians should carry on the struggle for their rights through *satyagraha* or through constitutional agitation, Gandhiji replied:]

If the South African Indian community had guts in them, I would say *Satyagraha*, and they are bound to win. I am hoping that some day from among Indian youths, born in South Africa, a person will arise who will stand up for the rights of his countrymen domiciled there, and make the vindication of those rights his life's mission. He will be so pure, so cultured, so truthful and so dignified in his bearing that he will disarm all opposition. The Whites will then say: "If all Indians were like him, we should have no objection to giving them an equal status with us." But he will answer: "It is not enough that there is one representative of the Indian community whom you are ready to recognize as your equal. What I am, other countrymen of mine too can be, if, instead of calling them names and putting them under all sorts of disabilities, you give them a sporting chance in the matter of educational and other facilities which are to-day denied them." Such a one, when he appears, will not need to be coached by me. He will assert himself by his sheer genius.

—*Harijan* : Feb. 18. 1939.

## XXIII

### WORKING OF NON-VIOLENCE

*"I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is*

*the means, the end for every nation is complete independence."*

ALL SOCIETY is held together by non-violence, even as the earth is held in her position by gravitation. But when the Law of Gravitation was discovered, the discovery yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even so, when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the Law of Non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is to-day. But I cannot say in advance what the government, based wholly on non-violence, will be like.

What is happening to-day is disregard of the Law of Non-violence and enthronement of violence, as if it were an eternal law. The democracies, therefore, that we see at work in England, America and France are only so-called, because they are no less based on violence than Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or even Soviet Russia. The only difference is that the violence of the last three is much better organized than that of the three Democratic Powers. Nevertheless, we see to-day a mad race for outdoing one another in the matter of armaments. And if, when the clash comes, as it is bound to come one day, the Democracies win, they will do so only because they will have the backing of their peoples who imagine that they have a voice in their own government; whereas, in the other three cases, the peoples might rebel against their own dictatorships.

Holding the view that without the recognition of non-violence on a national scale, there is no such thing as a constitutional or democratic government, I devote my energy to the propagation of non-violence as the Law of our Life,—individual, social, political, national and international. I fancy that I have seen the light, though dimly. I write cautiously, for I do not profess to know the whole of the Law. If I know the successes of my experiments, I know also my failures. But the successes are enough to fill me with undying hope.

I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means, the end for every nation is complete independence. There will be an International League only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are fully independent. The nature of that independence will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned. One thing is certain. In a society based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated.

Thus, the conclusion is irresistible that for one like me, wedded to non-violence, constitutional or democratic government is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy. While I prate about universal non-violence, my experiment is confined to India. If it succeeds, the world will accept it without effort. There is, however, a big BUT. The pause does not worry me. My faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness.

—*Harijan* : Feb. 11, 1939.

#### XXIV

#### WHAT TO DO ?

*"A true pacifist is a true satyagrahi. The latter acts by faith and, therefore, is not concerned about the result, for he knows that it is assured when the action is true."*

HERE IS AN IMPORTANT letter from a Principal who wishes to remain anonymous:

"A troubled conscience seeks the reasoned opinion of others to help to solve the following pressing question: Is the carrying out of the pledge of the Peace Pledge

Union (the late Dick Sheppard's organization for opposing war by the refusal to resort to violence under any circumstances whatever) a right and practicable course of action in the present conditions of our world? "On the side of 'Yea' there are the following arguments:

1. The world's greatest spiritual teachers have taught and exemplified in their own lives that an evil thing can only be destroyed by good means, and never by evil means, and any sort of violence (particularly that of war, even solely in so-called self-defence) is undoubtedly an evil means, whatever may be the motive. Violence is, therefore, *always* wrong.

2. The real causes of the present violence and misery can never be removed by war. This was proved to the hilt in the last 'war to end war', and the same will always be true. Violence is, therefore, unpractical.

3. Those who feel they must fight to defend liberty and democracy (even though they would fight for no lesser cause) are deluded. War, in modern conditions, even if it ends in victory, means the more certain destruction of such liberties as remain to us than even conquest by an invader might mean; for no modern war can be waged successfully without the complete regimentation of entire peoples. It is better to die in conscientiously resisting oppression non-violently, than to live as a pawn in the regimented society which *must* emerge from another war, whoever may win it.

"On the side of 'Nay', there are the following arguments:

1. Non-violent resistance can only be effective in resisting people who are capable of being moved by moral and humanitarian considerations. Fascism not only is not moved by such considerations, but openly scoffs at them as signs of weakness. It has no scruple in wiping out all resistance, and in employing any degree of brutality in order to do so. Non-violent resistance, therefore, stands no chance whatever against

## TOWARDS LASTING PEACE

Fascism. Non-violent resistance is, therefore, hopelessly unpractical in present conditions.

2. To refuse co-operation in violent resistance (*i.e.*, to be a C.O. in case of war or conscription) in defence of democratic liberty is tantamount to helping those who are destroying that liberty. Fascist aggression has undoubtedly been encouraged by the knowledge that the Democracies contain numbers of people who are unwilling to fight in their defence, and who would even oppose (and thus obstruct) their own governments if war breaks out or some sort of conscription is enforced. This being so, the conscientious objector to violent means of defence becomes not merely ineffective in promoting peace, but actually helpful to those who are breaking it.

3. War may destroy liberty, but if the Democracies survive, there is at least some possibility of regaining part of it; whereas if the Fascists are allowed to rule the world, there is no chance at all. Conscientious objectors by weakening the democratic forces are helping the opposers, and thus defeating their own object.

"The solution of this question is obviously terribly pressing for, say, a young man in any conscriptionist country to-day, or even in Great Britain, menaced as she is. But is it not really just as pressing for those in other countries, say South Africa, Egypt, or Australia which may have to face the possibility of invasion, or in an India which, in the event of 'Complete Independence', might be faced with the possibility of invasion by Japan or by a pan-Islamic combination?

"In the face of such possibilities (say rather probabilities), ought not even every keen conscience (whether in a young body or in an old) to be certain exactly what is the right and practical way of action? In some way on some (if not every) day, this is the problem that every one of us has to face for himself. Can your readers help to clarify the issues? Those who are not

sure of the answer they must give when the time comes, will be made surer by thinking it out. Those who are sure of their own answer, may help others to become equally sure."

Nothing need be said about the arguments in favour of the Peace Pledger's resistance. Those against resistance deserve careful examination. The first argument, if it is valid, cuts at the very root of the anti-war movement, which is based on the assumption that it is possible to convert Fascists and Nazis. They belong to the same species as the so-called Democracies or, better still, war resisters themselves. They show in their family circles the same tenderness, affection, consideration and generosity that war resisters are likely to show even outside such circles. The difference is only of degree. Indeed, Fascists and Nazis are a revised edition of so-called Democracies, if they are not an answer to the latter's misdeeds. Kirby Page, in his brochure on the toll of the late War, has shown that both the combatants were guilty of falsehoods, exaggerations and inhumanities. The Versailles Treaty was a treaty of revenge against Germany by the victors. The so-called Democracies have before now misappropriated other people's lands and have resorted to ruthless repression. What wonder if Messrs. Hitler & Co. have reduced to a science the unscientific violence their predecessors had developed for exploiting the so-called backward races for their own material gain? It is, therefore, a matter of rule of three to find out the exact amount of non-violence required to melt the harder hearts of the Fascists and the Nazis, if it is assumed, as it is, that the so-called Democracies melt before a given amount of non-violence. Therefore, we must eliminate from consideration the first argument, which would be fatal if it could be proved to have any content in it.

The other two arguments are practical. The pacifists may not do anything to weaken their own governments so as to compel defeat. But for fear of so doing, they may



not miss the only effective chance they have of demonstrating their undying faith in the futility of all war. If their own governments go mad and make martyrs of war resisters, they (the governments) must suffer the consequence of the unrest of their own creation. The Democracies must respect the liberty of individual non-violent conscience, however inconvenient it may be. From that respect, there will spring hope for the world. This means that they put their conscience and truth before their country's so-called interest. For, regard for one's conscience, if it is really such, has never yet injured any legitimate cause or interest. Therefore, it comes to this that a pacifist must resist when he feels strongly that, whether so-called Democracies live or die, the tug of war will never end war, and that it will only end when at the crucial moment a body of pacifists have at any cost testified their living faith by suffering, if need be, the extreme penalty. I know the point for me to consider is not how to avoid the extreme penalty, but how to behave so as to achieve the object in view. Where the very disturbing but potent factor of faith is part of one's conduct, human calculations are of no avail. A true pacifist is a true *satyagrahi*. The latter acts by faith and, therefore, is not concerned about the result, for he knows that it is assured when the action is true.

After all, what is the gain if the so-called Democracies win? War certainly will not end. Democracies will have adopted all the tactics of the Fascists and the Nazis, including conscription and all other forcible methods to compel and exact obedience. All that may be gained at the end of the victory is the possibility of comparative protection of individual liberty. But that protection does not depend upon outside help. It comes from the internal determination to protect it against the whole world. In other words, the true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty and, therefore, his country's and ultimately that of the whole of mankind. In the coming

test, pacifists have to prove their faith by resolutely refusing to do anything with war, whether of defence or offence. But the duty of resistance accrues only to those who believe in non-violence as a creed — not to those who will calculate and will examine the merits of each case and decide whether to approve of or oppose a particular war. It follows that such resistance is a matter for each person to decide for himself and under the guidance of the inner voice, if he recognizes its existence.

— *Harijan* : April 15, 1939.

## XXV

## THE IMPENDING CRISIS

*"I personally would not purchase my country's freedom by violence, even if such a thing were a possibility. My faith in the wise saying, that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword, is imperishable."*

A SISTER FROM London wired on the 24th instant :

"Please act. World awaiting lead."

Another wire from another sister in London, received to-day, says:

"Urge you consider immediate expression of your unshakable faith in reason, not force, to rulers and all peoples."

I have been hesitating to say anything on the impending world crisis which affects the welfare not of a few nations, but of the whole of mankind. I have felt that my word can have no effect on those on whom depends the decision whether there is to be war or peace. I know that many in the West believe that my word does carry weight. I wish I shared their belief. Not having such belief, I have been praying in secret that God may spare us the calamity of war. But I have no hesitation in redeclaring my faith

in reason—which is another word for non-violence—rather than the arbitrament of war for the settlement of disputes or redress of wrongs. I cannot emphasize my belief more forcibly than by saying that I personally would not purchase my own country's freedom by violence, even if such a thing were a possibility. My faith in the wise saying, that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword, is imperishable. How I wish Herr Hitler would respond to the appeal of the President of the United States and allow his claim to be investigated by arbitrators, in whose choice he will have as effective a voice as the disputants!

— *Harijan* : Sept. 2, 1939.

## XXVI

### THE SIMLA VISIT

*"I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart, I am in perpetual quarrel with God that He should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes, at the end of the daily quarrel, that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith, even though I may break in the attempt".*

HAVING MADE MY position vis-a-vis the Congress quite clear, I told His Excellency\* that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian stand-point. I told him that I could not contemplate, without being stirred to the very depth, the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the Houses of

\* Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy.

Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart, I am in perpetual quarrel with God that He should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes, at the end of the daily quarrel, that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith, even though I may break in the attempt.

And so, as though in anticipation of the agony that was awaiting me, I sent on the 23rd July from Abbottabad the following letter to Herr Hitler :

"Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

"It is quite clear that you are to-day the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object, however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war, not without considerable success?

"Anyway, I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you."

How I wish that even now he would listen to reason and the appeal from almost the whole of thinking mankind, not excluding the German people themselves! I must refuse to believe that the Germans contemplate with equanimity the evacuation of big cities like London for fear of destruction to be wrought by man's inhuman ingenuity. They cannot contemplate with equanimity such destruction of themselves and their own monuments. I am not, therefore, just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what

will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany, ruined and humbled?

Yet, it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that Congressmen and all other responsible Indians, individually and collectively, have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama.

—*Harijan* : Sept. 93, 1939.

## XXVII

### SOURCE OF MY SYMPATHY

*"My sympathy for England and France is not a result of momentary emotion or, in cruder language, of hysteria. It is derived from the never-drying fountain of non-violence, which my breast has nursed for fifty years. I claim no infallibility for my judgment. All I claim is that my sympathy for England and France is reasoned."*

THE STATEMENT MADE by me just after interview with H. E. the Viceroy has had a mixed reception. It has been described as sentimental twaddle by one critic, and as a statesman-like pronouncement by another. There are variations between the two extremes. I suppose all the critics are right from their own standpoint, and all are wrong from the absolute standpoint which, in this instance, is that of the author. He wrote for nobody's satisfaction but his own. I abide by every word I have said in it. It has no political value, except what every humanitarian opinion may possess. Interrelation of ideas cannot be prevented.

I have a spirited protest from a correspondent. It calls for a reply. I do not reproduce the letter, as parts of it I do

not understand myself. But there is no difficulty in catching its drift. The main argument is this :

“If you shed tears over the possible destruction of the English Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, have you no tears for the possible destruction of the monuments of Germany? And, why do you sympathize with England and France and not with Germany? Is not Hitler an answer to the ravishing of Germany by the Allied Powers during the last War? If you were a German, had the resourcefulness of Hitler, and were a believer in the doctrine of retaliation, as the whole world is, you would have done what Hitler is doing. Nazism may be bad. We do not know what it really is. The literature we get is one-sided. But I suggest to you that there is no difference between Chamberlain and Hitler. In Hitler’s place, Chamberlain would not have acted otherwise. You have done an injustice to Hitler by comparing him with Chamberlain, to the former’s disadvantage. Is England’s record in India any better than Hitler’s in another part of the world in similar circumstances? Hitler is but an infant pupil of the old imperialist England and France. I fancy that your emotion at the Viceregal Lodge had the better of your judgement.”

No one, perhaps, has described English misdeeds more forcibly, subject to truth, than I have. No one has resisted England more effectively, perhaps, than I have. And my desire for and power of resistance remain unabated. But there are seasons for speech and action, as there are seasons for silence and inaction.

In the dictionary of *satyagraha*, there is no enemy. But as I have no desire to prepare a new dictionary for *satyagrahis*, I use the old words giving them a new meaning. A *satyagrahi* loves his so-called enemy even as his friend. He owns no enemy. As a *satyagrahi*, i.e. votary of *ahimsa*, I must wish well to England. My wishes regarding Germany were, and they still are, irrelevant for the moment. But I

have said in a few words in my statement that I would not care to erect the freedom of my country on the remains of despoiled Germany. I should be as much moved by a contemplation of the possible destruction of Germany's monuments. Herr Hitler stands in no need of my sympathy. In assessing the present merits, the past misdeeds of England and the good deeds of Germany are irrelevant. Rightly or wrongly, and irrespective of what the other Powers have done before under similar circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the War. I do not judge his claim. It is highly probable that his right to incorporate Danzig in Germany is beyond question, if the Danzig Germans desire to give up their independent status. It is no answer to the rejection of the appeal for submission to arbitration that it came from interested quarters. Even a thief may conceivably make a correct appeal to his fellow-thief. I think I am right in saying that the whole world was anxious that Herr Hitler should allow his demand to be examined by an impartial tribunal. If he succeeds in his design, his success will be no proof of the justness of his claim. It will be one more proof that though we humans have changed the form, we have not changed the manners of the beast.

I hope it is now clear to my critics that my sympathy for England and France is not a result of momentary emotion or, in cruder language, of hysteria. It is derived from the never-drying fountain of non-violence which my breast has nursed for fifty years. I claim no infallibility for my judgement. All I claim is that my sympathy for England and France is reasoned. I invite those who accept the premises, on which my sympathy is based, to join me. What shape it should take is another matter. Alone I can but pray. And so I told His Excellency that my sympathy had no concrete value in the face of the concrete destruction that is facing those who are directly engaged in the War.

—*Harijan* : Sept. 16, 1939.

XXVIII  
TO THE BRAVE POLES

*"All that I can send to the brave Poles is my heartfelt prayer for the early termination of their fearful trial, and for the grant of the required strength to bear the suffering whose very contemplation makes one shudder. Their cause is just and their victory certain. For, God is always the upholder of justice."*

[To the cable\* received from Morges (Switzerland) from Paderevski, the aged ex-President of the Polish Republic and celebrated pianist, Gandhiji made the following reply:]

OF COURSE, my whole heart is with the Poles in the unequal struggle in which they are engaged for the sake of saving their freedom. But I am painfully conscious of the fact that my word carries no power with it. I wish I had the power to stop this mad destruction that is going on in Europe. I belong to a country that has lost its independence and is struggling to be free from the yoke of the greatest Imperialist Power on earth. It has adopted the unique method of non-violence to regain its lost freedom. Though the method has proved its efficacy to an extent, the goal seems far off. All that I can, therefore, send to the

\* "On behalf of a nation which is to-day defending the sacred right to remain free against a cruel and nameless tyranny, I appeal to you as one of the greatest moral authorities of the world to use your noble influence with your countrymen to gain for Poland their sympathy and friendship. Throughout the thousand years of its history, the Polish nation has always stood for the highest ideals of humanity, for faith, for justice, and peace. In this terrible hour, when innumerable innocent women and children are massacred daily, a word of sympathy and encouragement from you, great teacher of your own nation, would profoundly move the heart of every Pole."

—*Harijan* : Sept. 16, 1939.



brave Poles is my heart-felt prayer for the early termination of their fearful trial, and for the grant of the required strength to bear the suffering whose very contemplation makes one shudder. Their cause is just and their victory certain. For, God is always the upholder of justice.

—*Harijan* : Sept 16, 1939.

## XXIX

### A POLISH SISTER'S AGONY

*"If Poland has that measure of uttermost bravery and an equal measure of selflessness, history will forget that she defended herself with violence. Her violence will be counted almost as non-violence."*

"IN SPITE OF ALL I am going to try to reach Poland—sailing to-night to Basra in Iraq, then through Turkey and Rumania. The inner call is irresistible. It may seem madness from the ordinary human point of view. Now, I am not going for my mother's sake, nor for my dearest friends who are now on the battle-fields—ready to die at any moment—it is for Poland itself. I believe countries have also souls. Souls of nations are a reality, not a theory, for me. If I reach the soil of Poland, I will feel satisfied, even if I do not find those whom I love. It is the soul (and body) of the nation itself that is in its supreme hour of martyrdom. I believe Poland bleeds and struggles not only for her own rights, but for the Right, the Just, the True; for the Freedom of all nations, India including. I feel Hindu to the bottom of my heart; Indian as much as Pole, both Motherlands are to be in my soul to the last day of my life. But I could not live if I would not do, what is humanly possible, to reach the feet of the

Mother who is now bleeding in agony of pain. I shall write from the way, but not when I reach the War zone; I shall only think often about you and send mental messages as well as I can. Bapuji, do pray in all fervour of your great loving heart for those thousands of innocent people who suffer incredible pain and misery in Poland. It is these that need most sympathy and blessings and tender thoughts."

This is the letter a Polish sister wrote from Bombay harbour. I have known her for some years. She has become as much Indian as she is Polish. She had decided to work at Maganwadi in the Magan Museum. But the rumours of war upset her. She has an aged mother in Poland whom she could not bring out owing to passport difficulties. When the War actually broke out, she calmed down so far as her mother was concerned. But her highly strung nature would not let her rest, whilst her nearest and dearest were in peril of their lives for no offence of theirs. She is herself a believer through and through in non-violence. But her very non-violence made her restless. Her whole soul has rebelled against the wrong, as she thinks, that is being perpetrated against her Motherland. So, she has gone to find the Poland of her imagination fighting to the last ditch, not for merely preserving her own freedom but for the freedom of all those nations who have lost it. And in this she naturally includes her second love, India. May her dream prove true! If Poland has that measure of uttermost bravery and an equal measure of selflessness, history will forget that she defended herself with violence. Her violence will be counted almost as non-violence.

—*Harijan* : Sept. 23, 1939.

## INDIA MUST SHOW THE WAY

*"I have no manner of doubt that if it is possible to train millions in the black art of violence which is the law of the beast, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of the regenerate man."*

OF ALL THE COUNTRIES in the world, India is the least military. Though I have failed with the Working Committee in persuading them, at this supreme moment, to declare their undying faith in non-violence as the only sovereign remedy for saving mankind from destruction, I have not lost the hope that the masses will refuse to bow to the Moloch of War, but will rely upon their capacity for suffering to save the country's honour. How has the undoubted military valour of Poland served her against the superior forces of Germany and Russia? Would Poland unarmed have fared worse, if it had met the challenge of these combined forces with the resolution to face death without retaliation? Would the invading forces have taken a heavier toll from an infinitely more valorous Poland? It is highly probable that their essential nature would have made them desist from a wholesale slaughter of innocents.

Of all the organizations of the world, the Congress is the best fitted to show it the better way, indeed the only way, to the true life. Its non-violent experiment will have been in vain if, when India wakes up from the present fear, she does not show to the world the way of deliverance from the blood bath. The criminal waste of life and wealth that is now going on will not be the last, if India does not play her natural part by showing that human dignity is best preserved not by developing the capacity to deal destruction, but by refusing to retaliate. I have no manner of doubt that, if it is possible to train millions in the black

art of violence which is the law of the beast, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of the regenerate man.

—*Harijan* : Sept. 30, 1939.

## XXXI

## CONUNDRUMS

*"Assuming that God had endowed me with full powers (which He never does), I would at once ask the English to lay down arms, free all their vassals, take pride in being called 'Little Englanders', and defy all the totalitarians of the world to do their worst."*

THUS ASKS A WELL-KNOWN Congressman :

1. What is your personal attitude towards this War consistent with non-violence?
2. Is it the same as or different from your attitude during the last War?
3. How could you, with your non-violence, actively associate with and help the Congress whose policy is based on violence in the present crisis?
4. What is your concrete plan based on non-violence to oppose or prevent this War?"

These questions conclude a long friendly complaint about my seeming inconsistencies or my inscrutability. Both are old complaints, perfectly justified from the standpoint of the complainants, wholly unjustified from my own. Therefore, my complainants and I must agree to differ. Only this let me say. At the time of writing, I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown

from truth to truth; I have saved my memory an undue strain; and what is more, whenever I have been obliged to compare my writing even of fifty years ago with the latest, I have discovered no inconsistency between the two. But friends who observe inconsistency will do well to take the meaning that my latest writing may yield unless, of course, they prefer the old. But before making the choice, they should try to see if there is not an underlying and abiding consistency between the two seeming inconsistencies.

So far as my inscrutability is concerned, friends should take my assurance that there is never any attempt on my part to suppress my thought when it is relevant. Sometimes, it arises from my desire to be brief. And, sometimes, it must be due to my own ignorance of the subject on which I may be called upon to give an opinion.

To give a typical instance, a friend between whom and me there never is any mental reservation, thus writes in anguish rather than anger :

"In the not-improbable event of India being a theatre of war, is Gandhiji prepared to advise his countrymen to bare their breasts to the enemy's sword? A little while ago, I would have pledged my word he would do so, but I am not confident any more."

I can only assure him that, notwithstanding my recent writings, he can retain his confidence that I would give the same advice as he expects I would have given before, or as I gave to the Czechs or the Abyssinians. My non-violence is made of stern stuff. It is firmer than the firmest metal known to the scientists. Yet, alas, I am painfully conscious of the fact that it has still not attained its native firmness. If it had, God would have shown me the way to deal with the many local cases of violence that I helplessly witness daily. This is said not in arrogance, but in the certain knowledge of the power of perfect non-violence. I will not have the power of non-violence to be underestimated in order to cover my limitations or weaknesses.

Now for a few lines in answer to the foregoing questions.

1. My personal reaction towards this War is one of greater horror than ever before. I was not so disconsolate before as I am to-day. But the greater horror would prevent me to-day from becoming the self-appointed recruiting sergeant that I had become during the last War. And yet, strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the Allies. Willy-nilly, this War is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler. Though the part that Russia is playing is painful, let us hope that the unnatural combination will result in a happy, though unintended, fusion whose shape no one can foretell. Unless the Allies suffer demoralization, of which there is not the slightest indication, this War may be used to end all wars, at any rate of the virulent type that we see to-day. I have the hope that India, distraught though it is with internal dissensions, will play an effective part in ensuring the desired end and the spread of cleaner democracy than hitherto. This will undoubtedly depend upon how the Working Committee will ultimately act in the real tragedy that is being played on the world stage. We are both actors in and spectators of the drama. My line is cast. Whether I act as a humble guide of the Working Committee or, if I may use the same expression, without offence, of the Government, my guidance will be for the deliberate purpose of taking either or both along the path of non-violence, be the step ever so imperceptible. It is plain that I cannot force the pace either way. I can only use such power as God may endow my head or heart with for the moment.

2. I think I have covered the second question in answering the first.

3. There are degrees of violence as of non-violence. The Working Committee has not wilfully departed from the policy of non-violence. It could not honestly accept the real implications of non-violence. It felt the vast mass of Congressmen had never clearly understood that in the event of danger from without, they were to defend the country

by non-violent means. All that they had learnt truly was that they could put up a successful fight, on the whole non-violent, against the British Government. Congressmen have had no training in the use of non-violence in other fields. Thus, for example, they had not yet discovered a sure method of dealing successfully in a non-violent manner with communal riots or *goondalism*. The argument is final inasmuch as it is based on actual experience. I would not serve the cause of non-violence, if I deserted my best co-workers because they could not follow me in an extended application of non-violence. I, therefore, remain with them in the faith that their departure from the non-violent method will be confined to the narrowest field and will be temporary.

4. I have no ready-made concrete plan. For me, too, this is a new field. Only, I have no choice as to the means. It must always be purely non-violent, whether I am closeted with the members of the Working Committee or with the Viceroy. Therefore, what I am doing is itself part of the concrete plan. More will be revealed to me from day to day, as all my plans always have been. The famous Non-co-operation Resolution came to me within less than 24 hours of the meeting of the A. I. C. C. at which it was moved in Calcutta in 1920; and so did practically the Dandi March. The foundation of the first Civil Resistance under the then known name of Passive Resistance was laid by accident at a meeting of Indians in Johannesburg in 1906, convened for the purpose of finding the means of combating the Anti-Asiatic measure of those days. I had gone to the meeting with no pre-conceived resolution. It was born at the meeting. The creation is still expanding. But assuming that God had endowed me with full powers (which He never does), I would at once ask the English to lay down arms, free all their vassals, take pride in being called "Little Englanders" and defy all the totalitarians of the world to do their worst. Englishmen will then die unresistingly and go down to History as heroes of non-

violence. I would further invite Indians to co-operate with Englishmen in this godly martyrdom. It will be an indissoluble partnership drawn up in letters of the blood of their own bodies, not of their so-called enemies. But I have no such general power. Non-violence is a plant of slow growth.\* It grows imperceptibly but surely. And even at the risk of being misunderstood, I must act in obedience to "*the still small voice.*"

—*Harijan* : Sept. 30, 1939.

## XXXII

## INDIA'S ATTITUDE

*"I have every hope that the Congress will be able to show the world that the power that armaments give to defend right is nothing compared to the power that non-violence gives to do the same thing, and that, too, with better show of reason."*

I AM SORRY I had not seen Shrimati Kamaladevi's letter to *The Chronicle*.† Try as I will, I simply cannot do adequate justice to the reading of newspapers. The letter then remained on my file for want of time to deal with it. But I think delay has not affected the object of her letter. Perhaps, this is the psychological moment for me to express

\* "I know that the progress of non-violence is seemingly a terribly slow progress. But experience has taught me that it is the surest way to the common goal. There is deliverance neither for India nor for the world through clash of arms. Violence, even for vindication of justice, is almost played out. With that belief I am content to plough a lonely furrow, if it is to be my lot that I have no co-sharer in the out and out belief in non-violence."

—*Harijan*: Aug. 26, 1939.

† Omitted.



what is or should be India's attitude. I agree with Kamaladevi's analysis of the motives of the parties to the War. Both are fighting for their existence and for the furtherance of their policies. There is, however, this great difference between the two: However incomplete or equivocal the declarations of the Allies are, the world has interpreted them to mean that they are fighting for saving democracy. Herr Hitler is fighting for the extension of the German boundaries, although he was told that he should allow his claims to be submitted to an impartial tribunal for examination. He contemptuously rejected the way of peace or persuasion and chose that of the sword. Hence, my sympathy for the cause of the Allies. But my sympathy must not be interpreted to mean endorsement, in any shape or form, of the doctrine of the sword for the defence even of proved right. Proved right should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, *i.e.*, sanguinary, means. Man may, and should, shed his own blood for establishing what he considers to be his 'right'. He may not shed the blood of his opponent who disputes his 'right'. India, as represented by the Congress, has been fighting in order to prove 'right', not by the sword but by the non-violent method. And she has carved out for herself a unique place and prestige in the world, although she is yet far—let us hope, not very far—from the independence of her dream. Her novel method has evidently struck the imagination of the world. It has the right to expect India to play a decisive part in this War, which no people of the world have wanted, by insisting that the peace this time is not to be a mockery designed to share among the victors the spoils of war and to humiliate the vanquished. Jawaharlal Nehru, who has a right to speak for the Congress, has said in state-ly language that the peace must mean freedom for those who are held in bondage by the Imperialist Powers of the world. I have every hope that the Congress will also be able to show the world that the power that armaments give to defend right is nothing compared to the power that non-

violence gives to do the same thing and that, too, with better show of reason. Armaments can show no reason, they can make only a pretence of it.

—*Harijan* : Oct. 14, 1939.

## XXXIII

## ON TRIAL

*"Whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether, even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race of armaments is to court suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence, the last hope of the world will be gone."*

IN THE COURSE of the conversation with the members of the Working Committee, I discovered that their non-violence had never gone beyond fighting the British Government with that weapon. I had hugged the belief that Congressmen had appreciated the logical result of the practice of non-violence for the past twenty years in fighting the biggest Imperialist Power in the world. But in great experiments like that of non-violence, hypothetical questions have hardly any play. I myself used to say in answer to questions that when we had actually acquired Independence, we would know whether we could defend ourselves non-violently or not. But to-day the question is no longer hypothetical. Whether there is on the part of the British Government a favourable declaration or not, the Congress has to decide upon the course it would adopt in the event of an invasion of India. For, though there may be no settlement with the Government, the Congress has to declare its policy and say whether it would fight the invading host violently or non-violently.

So far as I can read the Working Committee's mind, after a fairly full discussion, the members think that Congressmen are unprepared for non-violent defence against armed invasion.

This is tragic. Surely, the means adopted for driving an enemy from one's house must, more or less, coincide with those to be adopted for keeping him out of the house. If anything, the latter process must be easier. The fact, however, is that our fight has not been one of non-violent resistance of the strong. It has been one of passive resistance of the weak. Therefore, there is no spontaneous response in our hearts, at this supreme moment, to an undying faith in the efficacy of non-violence. The Working Committee, therefore, wisely said that they were not ready for the logical step. The tragedy of the situation is that, if the Congress is to throw in its lot with those who believe in the necessity of armed defence of India, the past twenty years will have been years of gross neglect of the primary duty of Congressmen to learn the science of armed warfare. And I fear that history will hold me, as the general of the fight, responsible for the tragedy. The future historian will say that I should have perceived that the nation was learning not non-violence of the strong, but merely passivity of the weak and I should have, therefore, provided for Congressmen's military training.

Being obsessed with the idea that somehow or other India will learn true non-violence, it would not occur to me to invite my co-workers to train themselves for armed defence. On the contrary, I used to discountenance all sword-play and the display of stout *lathis*. Nor am I even now repentant for the past. I have the unquenchable faith that, of all the countries in the world, India is the one country which can learn the art of non-violence, that if the test were applied even now, there would be found, perhaps, thousands of men and women who would be willing to die without harbouring malice against their persecutors. I have harangued crowds and told them repeatedly that they

might have to suffer much, including death by shooting. Did not thousands of men and women brave hardships during the Salt Campaign, equal to any that soldiers are called upon to bear? No different capacity is required from what has been already evinced, if India has to contend against an invader. Only, it will have to be on a vaster scale.

One thing ought not to be forgotten. India unarmed would not require to be destroyed through poison gas or bombardment. It is the Maginot Line that has made the Siegfried Line necessary, and *vice versa*. Defence of India by the present methods has been necessary because she is an appendage of Britain. Free India can have no enemy. And if her people have learnt the art of saying resolutely 'No' and acting up to it, I dare say, no one would want to invade her. Our economy would be so modelled as to prove no temptation for the exploiter.

But some Congressmen will say: "Apart from the British, India has so many martial races within her border that they will want to put up a fight for the country which is as much theirs as ours." This is perfectly true. I am, therefore, talking, for the moment, only of Congressmen. How would they act in the event of an invasion? We shall never convert whole of India to our creed, unless we are prepared to die for it.

The world is looking for something new and unique from India. The Congress will be lost in the crowd, if it wears the same old outworn armour that the world is wearing to-day. The Congress has a name because it represents non-violence as a political weapon *par excellence*. If the Congress helps the Allies as a representative of non-violence, it will give to the Allied cause a prestige and a power which will be invaluable in deciding ultimate fate of the War. But the members of the Working Committee have honestly and bravely not made the profession of such non-violence.

My position is, therefore, confined to myself alone. I have to find out whether I have any fellow-traveller along

the lonely path. If I am in the minority of one, I must try to make converts. Whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether, even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race for armaments, is to court suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence, the last hope of the world will be gone. I must live up to the creed I have professed for the last half a century, and hope to the last breath that India will make non-violence her creed, preserve man's dignity, and prevent him from reverting to the type from which he is supposed to have raised himself.

—*Harijan*: Oct. 14, 1939.

#### XXXIV

#### A POSER

*"Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for—it is even the duty of—a believer in AHIMSA to distinguish between the aggressor and the defender. Having done so, he will side with the defender in a non-violent manner, i.e. give his life in saving him."*

A BRITISHER HAS WRITTEN to Deenbandhu Andrews a letter on the War, expounding his own views. He is an ardent pacifist. Deenbandhu has shared the letter with me. In it occur the following paragraphs :

"For India, too, I think that this is a very critical time. The danger I see is that Britain may promise full Dominion Status or something of the kind, and, as a result, India will raise an army and become one more military-minded nation. Her witness for the way of non-violence and soul-force would then be largely discounted.

"How can Gandhiji, as a believer in non-violence, ask for clarification of war aims with a view to getting India's support for Britain in this way of war? The only thing that he can do, and that we should all be doing, is to build up an army of men and women who are committed to the way of love and forgiveness and to receive, but never to return, violence. We have to work this out to see how it will alter our daily life, as well as all our thinking and acting towards other communities and nations. We have to be disciplined in this, and also to learn to act together as one man. Along this line, I see tremendous possibilities.

"Of course, we should also use all the influence we can to urge Britain to acknowledge and put into practice full democracy in India, as it is a high principle quite apart from whether India helps Britain in the War or not."

The danger that the writer senses is real. I dealt with it last week. The writer cavils at my sympathy with the Allies. I have shown it as an out and out believer in non-violence, even because of my belief. Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for—it is even the duty of—a believer in *ahimsa* to distinguish between the aggressor and the defender. Having done so, he will side with the defender in a non-violent manner, *i.e.*, give his life in saving him. His intervention is likely to bring a speedier end to the duel, and may even result in bringing about peace between the combatants.\* Applying the argument to the present War, if the Congress actively sides with the Allies in a non-violent way, the Con-

\* "It is open to a war-resister to judge between two combatants and wish success to the one who has justice on his side. By so judging, he is more likely to bring peace between the two than by remaining a mere spectator."

gress assistance will lift the Allied cause to a high moral plane and the Congress influence will be effectively used in the cause of peace. What is more, it will be the special business of the Congress to see that, if the War is fought to a finish, no humiliation is heaped upon the vanquished. That is the role I have conceived for the Congress. The Declaration of Independence has become a necessity. The question having been raised, the Congress cannot help Britain if Britain is secretly fighting for imperialism, while it declares to the world that the fight is for saving democracies. For Britain to be in the right, a clear declaration of her war aims is a necessity, irrespective of the Congress policy.

— *Harijan* : Oct. 21, 1939.

#### XXXV

### IN GOD'S GOOD HANDS

*"I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority nor my countrymen save the purely moral. If He holds me to be a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence in the place of the awful violence now ruling the earth, He will give me the strength and show me the way. My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands."*

"DEAR FRIEND,

... I read with deep interest and inspiration, in the early days of this War, a few lines written by you in *Harijan*, which have been a great help and comfort to me in those troubled times. They are as follows: "I personally would not purchase my own country's

freedom by violence, even if such a thing were possible. My faith that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword, is imperishable.”\* I have been encouraged, after mentioning my thoughts to my friend Agatha Harrison, to write and tell you what I have had so much in mind during these first distressful weeks of war. She has kindly let me see something of what you have written on the subject of the war situation, which helped me to understand your attitude towards it, but still leaves me under the sense of a deep concern, which I now ask permission to lay before you.

“I meet so often now-a-days even fine and convinced friends of peace who, in view of the brutal suppression of independence in countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland, feel themselves in a moral dilemma; who take the view that when such things happen, war is inevitable and even right for their country, in the attempt to restore what has been lost—though, as individuals, they would probably dissociate themselves from it. I have wondered whether this is not the moment when such an acknowledged spiritual prophet and leader as you are, might give a clarion call to the whole world, pointing to another way than the senseless gamble and destruction of war; another way, not merely for settling of disputes but, far more important, for resistance to evil and even for the attainment of political aims. The war method, as we experienced in 1914-1918, seems inevitably to vitiate its own ends, however good these may be at the outset; whereas the moral means of non-violence and redemptive love do but strengthen and purify the aims, in so far as these are based on moral right and justice. This you have taught us. It seems to me that a lead from one with your spiritual authority along the lines of a better way than war to help the stricken and oppressed, whether individuals or nations, might come with redeeming

\* See *The Impending Crisis* P. 75.



power to many who find themselves in the distress of a moral dilemma at the present time, and release spiritual energies which, because of this dilemma, are lamed and useless, or are prostituted in the attempt to supply uplift and inspiration for the pursuit of a holy war for civilization, freedom—or for the mere negative aim of destroying Hitlerism by successful rivalry in its own methods.

“I have no moral right to judge—sadly the contrary—but I know that you appreciate frankness, and I therefore venture to confess myself puzzled that, so far from seizing this opportunity to proclaim the better way in which you have been such a magnificent pioneer, you appear (I feel sure I am mistaken or misunderstand) to be thinking mainly of what political advantage for the cause of independence in India can be gained from the war situation. One almost has the impression that the opportunity which war presents is welcomed, and that support for the Allies in the attempt to gain their ends through war would be gladly given if an adequate bargain were forthcoming.

“I have no special knowledge of Indian affairs, but, relying on the judgment of my best friends, who have close association with the best opinion in India, I am eager for the realization of their hopes and yours; but I would hope for this as the outcome of a liberal movement of mind in our own people and Government as part of a generous desire and determination for a new and better world, instead of one filled with aggression and imperialist domination—rather than as a bargain by imperialist Britain without any change of mind, primarily for the purpose of obtaining the material support of India in winning the War.

“My heart cries to you out of its distress and despair, caused by the War. I have seen so much that is good in the German people, the self-giving idealism of its youth, whom I love, as well as the evil with which I am

so intimately acquainted through trying to help the victims. I have been in a Nazi prison, and have believed that through my suffering there has been shown to me a nobler way to help the splendid young men of Germany and of my own country, than the way we are about to employ, of driving millions of them to slaughter one another. I believe that many people throughout the world are longing to see the way out of this evil into which we are slowly slipping deeper and deeper, until it may soon be too late. Perhaps, you alone can help us. I write to you in deep concern to beg you to consider whether it may not be laid upon you to do so.

With deep esteem and love,

49, Parliament Hill,  
London N.W. 3.

Your friend sincerely,  
CORDER CATCHPOOL.

I know that this letter reflects the attitude of many Englishmen who look to me for showing the better way. Dr. Radhakrishnan's collection of tributes on my completing seventy years has deepened the hope of thousands of peace-lovers. But I know what a poor instrument I am for the fulfilment of that hope. Admirers have given me credit I do not deserve. I am not able to testify that India furnishes the world with a good example of non-violence of the strong and, therefore, as a substitute for armed resistance against an aggressor. India undoubtedly has shown the efficacy of passive non-violence as a weapon of the weak. But useful as it is as a substitute of terrorism, I claim no newness or merit for it. It is no contribution to the peace movement.

It is no wonder that my identification with the Congress demand appears to contradict my previous writing quoted by my correspondent. There is, however, no contradiction. Even now, as then, I would not gain Independence at the cost of non-violence. The critic might retort that, if the British Government made the required declaration, I would be helping the Allies and thereby taking part in violence. The retort would be reasonable but

for the fact that the additional help that Britain would gain from the Congress would be purely moral. The Congress would contribute neither men nor money. The moral influence would be used on the side of peace. I have already said in these columns that my non-violence does recognize different species of violence—defensive and offensive. It is true that in the long run the difference is obliterated, but the initial merit persists. A non-violent person is bound, when the occasion arises, to say which side is just. Thus, I wished success to the Abyssinians, the Spaniards, the Czechs, the Chinese and the Poles, though in each case I wished that they could have offered non-violent resistance. In the present case, if the Congress could justify the British case on the high ground professed by Mr. Chamberlain, India declared free would throw in her whole moral weight on the side of peace. The part I am playing is, in my opinion, strictly non-violent. There is no desire to embarrass the Government. There is to be no precipitate Civil Disobedience. Care is being taken to meet every just objection to the Congress demand and to smooth every difficulty in the way of Great Britain making the requisite declaration. The greatest strain is being put upon impatient Congressmen spoiling for a fight, though non-violent. I myself want to be able to play an effective part in bringing peace nearer. I might be able to do so if India becomes in fact an independent ally of Britain, though the legal process is delayed till the War is ended.

But who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral. If He holds me to be a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence in the place of the awful violence now ruling the earth, He will give me the strength and show me the way. My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands. Nothing can happen but by His will, expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He. We neither know Him nor His Law save through the glass darkly. But the

faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope, and faith in the future.

—*Harijan* : Dec. 9, 1939.

## XXXVI

## BRITAIN'S WAR AIMS

*"I observe that the British statesmen have now begun to confine the war aims to the freedom of European nations. Unless the War comes to an abrupt end, they will find it necessary to go back to the original aim of saving the world for democracy."*

AS I VISUALIZE the war at this stage, I see that it has not yet commenced with grim earnestness. Both parties are discovering and inventing new methods of destruction, but both are, I hope, evading the terrible slaughter which must result from any serious impact between the two. Awful as the indiscriminate sinking of ships with the attendant loss of life is, it will be found to be insignificant compared to what will happen when the fight commences in right earnest. Meanwhile, moral issues are being decided for the combatants, whether they will or no. I observe that British statesmen have now begun to confine the war aims to the freedom of European nations. Unless the War comes to an abrupt end, they will find it necessary to go back to the original aim of saving the world for democracy. This War, with the gigantic preparations it has necessitated, will force the parties to cover much wider moral ground than they have perhaps contemplated. The War may, therefore, ultimately be decided on moral issues. At any rate, the Congress, which has voluntarily disarmed itself and chosen the path of peace or non-violence, is engaged in

bringing the moral issue\* to the forefront. And if it keeps patient, it may by its sheer insistence on the moral issue play an important part in preventing the impending holocaust.

—*Harijan* : Dec. 16, 1939.

### XXXVII

### CHINESE FRIEND'S QUESTIONS

*"I want to see India free in my life-time. But God may not consider me fit enough to see the dream of life fulfilled. Then I shall quarrel not with Him, but with myself."*

*Chinese Friend* : May I ask one or two more important questions before leaving? Do you expect to see India independent?

*Gandhiji* : Yes, of course, I *want* to see India free in my lifetime. But God may not consider me fit enough to see the dream of life fulfilled. Then, I shall quarrel not with Him, but with myself."

*Chinese Friend* : But without an army how can you ever succeed?

\* "The declaration of British policy about India is a purely moral issue, for freedom-loving India has neither the will nor the capacity to resort to armed revolt. Nevertheless, it is her right to know Britain's will about her. I am aware that Britain can impress men and money from India treated as her dependency but she can get moral weight on her side only from an India conscious of her freedom. I am anxious as a friend of Britain bound by many personal ties, that she should come out victorious, not because of her superiority in the use of arms, but because of her will to be just all along the line. She will then have the true friendship and sympathy of millions of people all over the world, who have become sick of the palpable lies disseminated to sustain greed and hunger for domination."

—*Harijan* : Dec. 9, 1939.

*Gandhiji* : Well, we have done so thus far. We are nearing our goal without having fired a single shot. It will be a miracle, if we succeed. But there is nothing to make me doubt the efficacy of the weapon of non-violence. Whether, however, we have the requisite degree of it within us has yet to be proved.

*Chinese Friend*: Is there hatred against the British?

*Gandhiji* : Yes—alas—but if we remain non-violent, hatred will die as everything does from disuse.

*Chinese Friend* : It is very hard for us to get rid of hatred against Japan.

*Gandhiji* : Yes, it will take generations for you, as you are using violence against them. I do not say that you should not have defended yourselves violently, but under those circumstances hatred cannot die.

*Chinese Friend* : Are the British easier to deal with than any other people ?

*Gandhiji* : They are as easy, in terms of non-violence, to deal with as anyone else. But not having dealt with anyone else, I cannot say from practical experience. All conquerors of India have reacted to what is noble in Indian culture and in Indian nature, the Muslims included. I believe the Germans would have done likewise. It may even be that the English reaction has been less than what others' may have been because of their insularity and colour prejudice.

—*Harijan* : April 13, 1940.

### XXXVIII

## TWO QUESTIONS FROM AMERICA

*"The sum-total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on. From which fact I infer that it is the Law of Love that rules mankind. . . . It*

*gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that Love is the supreme and only Law of Life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith."*

A friend writing from America propounds the following two questions:

"1. Granted that *Satyagraha* is capable of winning India's independence, what are the chances of its being accepted as a principle of State policy in a free India? In other words, would a strong and independent India rely on *Satyagraha* as a method of self-preservation, or would it lapse back to seeking refuge in the age-old institution of war, however defensive its character? To restate the question on the basis of a purely theoretic problem: Is *Satyagraha* likely to be accepted only in an up-hill battle, when the phenomenon of martyrdom is fully effective, or is it also to be the instrument of a sovereign authority which has neither the need nor the scope of behaving on the principle of martyrdom?

"2. Suppose a free India adopts *Satyagraha* as an instrument of State policy, how would she defend herself against probable aggression by another sovereign State? To restate the question on the basis of a purely theoretic problem: What would be the *Satyagrahic* action-patterns to meet the invading army at the frontier? What kind of resistance can be offered the opponent before a common area of action, such as the one now existing in India between the Indian nationalists and the British Government, is established? Or, should the *Satyagrahis* withhold their action until after the opponent has taken over the country?"

The questions are admittedly theoretical. They are also premature for the reason that I have not mastered the whole technique of non-violence. The experiment is still in the making. It is not even in its advanced stage. The nature of the experiment requires one to be satisfied with one step

at a time. The distant scene is not for him to see. Therefore, my answers can only be speculative.

In truth, as I have said before, now we are not having unadulterated non-violence even in our struggle to win independence.

As to the first question, I fear that the chances of non-violence being accepted as a principle of State policy are very slight, so far as I can see at present. If India does not accept non-violence as her policy after winning independence, the second question becomes superfluous.

But I may state my own individual view of the potency of non-violence. I believe that a State can be administered on a non-violent basis if the vast majority of the people are non-violent. So far as I know, India is the only country which has a possibility of being such a State. I am conducting my experiment in that faith. Supposing, therefore, that India attained independence through pure non-violence, India could retain it, too, by the same means. A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession but non-co-operate with the aggressor. Thus, supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State will let him in, but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannons. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery. Practically speaking, there will be probably no greater loss in men than if forcible resistance was offered; there will be no expenditure



in armaments and fortifications. The non-violent training received by the people will add inconceivably to their moral height. Such men and women will have shown personal bravery of a type far superior to that shown in armed warfare. In each case, the bravery consists in dying, not in killing. Lastly, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violent resistance. That such a thing has not happened before is no answer to my speculation. I have drawn no impossible picture. History is replete with instances of individual non-violence of the type I have mentioned. There is no warrant for saying or thinking that a group of men and women cannot by sufficient training act non-violently as a group or nation. Indeed, the sum-total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on. From which fact I infer that it is the Law of Love that rules mankind. Had violence, *i.e.* hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence. It gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that Love is the supreme and only Law of Life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith. Even the mixed non-violence of India has supported it. But if it is not enough to convince an unbeliever, it is enough to incline a friendly critic to view it with favour.

—*Harijan*: April 13, 1940.

### XXXIX

#### OF WHAT AVAIL IS NON-VIOLENCE?

*"I do not wish ill to Britain. I shall grieve if Britain goes down. But the moral influence of the Congress cannot avail Britain unless she washes her hands clean of India."*

AN INDIAN FRIEND writes:

"Yesterday Reuter in pathetic terms related how the population of Norway under the rain of bombs and machine-gun bullets was fleeing from towns, completely demoralized and in panic. It is shocking that such good people should so suddenly be reduced to this helpless condition, simply because they had neither the will nor the resources to develop the technique of destruction into a fine art. The futility of violence, and also, I fear, its temporary efficacy, is being proved. Of what avail was the violent defence of Norway? And yet, for the time being, the bigger violence of Germany seems to have succeeded! Let us hope eventually everyone will see the futility of violence and a new era may dawn.

"But are we really making a non-violent contribution towards the world problem? Of what avail is our non-violence to Norway, Sweden and Denmark? Virtually, are we not giving a handle to Germany? True, we are doing nothing beyond embarrassing Great Britain, and, perhaps, we may say that such an embarrassment is inevitable and is not caused deliberately. But the fact remains that England is in distress, and by our action we are embarrassing not only England but all other good nations, who have been victims of aggression. We are not likely, it seems, to succeed in changing England's heart. And victims like Norway etc. can never appreciate our attitude.

"In the light of our present attitude, the international world can with justification misinterpret our past help to victims of aggression like China and Spain. Were they more deserving of our help than the present victims? And if not, then why this distinction? Simply because an imperialist power, even for the sake of its own interest, happens to decide to do something which is noble and moral! You have never regretted your action during the last War, when you vigorously recruited people for military purposes. This time your attitude appears to be in sharp contrast, although you say that both attitudes are right."

My correspondent is not alone in bemoaning the lot of most cultured and inoffensive people like the Danes and the Norwegians. This War is showing the futility of violence. Supposing Hitler becomes victorious over the Allies, he will never subjugate England and France. It will mean another war. Supposing the Allies are victorious, the world will fare no better. They will be more polite but not less ruthless, unless they learn the lesson of non-violence during the war and unless they shed the gains they have made through violence. The first condition of non-violence is justice all round in every department of life. Perhaps, it is too much to expect of human nature. I do not, however, think so. No one should dogmatize about the capacity of human nature for degradation or exaltation.

Indian non-violence has brought no relief to the cultured Western Powers because it is still poor stuff. Why travel so far to see its inefficacy? We, in India, are torn asunder in spite of the Congress policy of non-violence. The Congress itself is distrusted. Not until the Congress or a similar group of people represents the non-violence of the strong, will the world catch the infection.

India's aid to Spain and China was merely moral. The material aid was but an insignificant token of it. There is hardly an Indian who does not feel the same sympathy for Norway and Denmark, who lost their freedom overnight. Though their case is different from that of Spain and China, their ruin is more complete perhaps than that of Spain and China. Indeed, there is a material difference even between China and Spain. But there is no difference so far as sympathy is concerned. Pauper India has nothing to send to these countries except her non-violence. But, as I have said, this is not yet a sendable commodity. It will be, when India has gained her freedom through non-violence.

There, then, remains Britain's case. The Congress has caused no embarrassment. I have declared already that I

shall do nothing to embarrass Great Britain. She will be embarrassed, if there is anarchy in India. That the Congress, so long as it is under my discipline, will not support.

What the Congress cannot do is to lend its moral influence to Britain. Moral influence is never mechanically given. It is for Britain to take it. Perhaps, British statesmen do not think the Congress has any to lend. Perhaps, they think that all they need is material aid in this warring world. If they do, they will not be far wrong. Morality is contraband in war. My correspondent has given up the whole of his case for Britain when he says, "We are not likely to succeed in changing Britain's heart." I do not wish ill to Britain. I shall grieve if Britain goes down. But the moral influence of the Congress cannot avail Britain unless she washes her hands clean of India. It works under its own unalterable condition.

My friend does not see the difference between my recruiting in Kheda and my attitude now. During the last War, the moral issue had not been raised. The Congress was not pledged to non-violence. It had not the moral hold on the masses it now enjoys. I was acting on my own in all I did. I had even attended the War Conference. And to be true to my declaration, I had been recruiting at the cost of my health. I told the people that, if they wanted arms, military service was the surest way to get them. But if they were non-violent like me, my appeal was not to them. There was no non-violent man among my audiences so far as I know. Their reluctance was based on ill-will towards Britain. This was gradually giving place to an enlightened determination to throw off the foreign yoke.

Things have changed since then. In spite of the unanimous support that Britain got during the last War from India, the British attitude was translated into the Rowlatt Act and the like. The Congress accepted non-violent non-co-operation to meet the British menace. There is the memory of the Jallianwala Bagh, the Simon Commission, the Round Table Conferences, the emasculation of Bengal

for the sake of the misdeeds of a few. The Congress having accepted non-violence, I do not need to go to the people to give recruits. Through the Congress I can give something infinitely better than a few such recruits. Of that, evidently, Britain has no need. I am willing but helpless.

—*Harijan*: May 4, 1940.

## XL

### DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

*"My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence."*

Q. Why do you say: "Democracy can only be saved through non-violence?" (The questioner is an American friend)

A. Because democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence, cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak. The weakest, you say, go to the wall. Take your own case. Your land is owned by a few capitalist owners. The same is true of South Africa. These large holdings cannot be sustained except by violence, veiled if not open. Western democracy, as it functions today, is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best, it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism. Why is there the war today, if it is not for the satisfaction of the desire to share the spoils? It was not through democratic methods that Britain bagged India. What is the meaning of South

African democracy? Its very constitution has been drawn to protect the white man against the coloured man, the natural occupant. Your own history is perhaps blacker still, in spite of what the Northern States did for the abolition of slavery. The way you have treated the Negro presents a discreditable record. And it is to save such democracies that the War is being fought. There is something very hypocritical about it. I am thinking just now in terms of non-violence and trying to expose violence in its nakedness.

India is trying to evolve true democracy, *i.e.* without violence. Our weapons are those of *Satyagraha* expressed through the *Charkha*, the village industries, primary education through handicrafts, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition, and non-violent organization of labour as in Ahmedabad. These mean mass effort and mass education. We have big agencies for conducting these activities. They are purely voluntary, and their only sanction is service of the lowliest.

This is the permanent part of the non-violent effort. From this effort is created the capacity to offer non-violent resistance called Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience which may culminate in mass refusal to pay rent and taxes. As you know, we have tried Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience on a fairly large scale and fairly successfully. The experiment has in it promise of a brilliant future. As yet our resistance has been that of the weak. The aim is to develop the resistance of the strong. Your wars will never ensure safety for democracy. India's experiment can and will, if the people come up to the mark or, to put it another way, if God gives me the necessary wisdom and strength to bring the experiment to fruition.

—*Harijan*: May 18, 1940.

## HOW TO COMBAT HITLERISM

*"Hitlerism will never be defeated by counter-Hitlerism. It can only breed superior Hitlerism raised to the nth degree. What is going on before our eyes is a demonstration of the futility of violence, as also of Hitlerism."*

WHATEVER Hitler may ultimately prove to be, we know what Hitlerism has come to mean. It means naked ruthless force, reduced to an exact science and worked with scientific precision. In its effect, it becomes almost irresistible.

In the early days of *Satyagraha*, when it was still known as Passive Resistance, *The Star* of Johannesburg, stirred by the sight of a handful of Indians, wholly unarmed and incapable of organized violence even if they wished it, pitting themselves against an overwhelmingly armed Government, had a cartoon in which the latter was depicted as a steam-roller representing irresistible force, and passive resistance was depicted as an elephant unmoved and comfortably planting himself in his seat. This was marked immovable force. The cartoonist had a true insight into the duel between the irresistible and the immovable forces. It was then a stalemate. The sequel we know. What was depicted and appeared to be irresistible was successfully resisted by the immovable force of *Satyagraha*, call it suffering without retaliation.

What became true then, can be equally true now. Hitlerism will never be defeated by counter-Hitlerism. It can only breed superior Hitlerism raised to the *nth* degree. What is going on before our eyes is a demonstration of the futility of violence, as also of Hitlerism.

Let me explain what I mean by failure of Hitlerism. It has robbed the small nations of their liberty. It has com-

pelled France to sue for peace. Probably, by the time this is in print, Britain will have decided upon her course. The fall of France is enough for my argument. I think French statesmen have shown rare courage in bowing to the inevitable and refusing to be party to senseless mutual slaughter. There can be no sense in France coming out victorious, if the stake is in truth lost. The cause of liberty becomes a mockery if the price to be paid is wholesale destruction of those who are to enjoy liberty. It then becomes an inglorious satiation of ambition. The bravery of the French soldier is world-known. But let the world know also the greater bravery of the French statesmen in suing for peace. I have assumed that the French statesmen have taken the step in a perfectly honourable manner as behoves true soldiers. Let me hope that Herr Hitler will impose no humiliating terms but show that, though he can fight without mercy, he can at least conclude peace not without mercy.

But to resume the thread of the argument. What will Hitler do with his victory? Can he digest so much power? Personally, he will go as empty-handed as his not very remote predecessor Alexander. For the Germans, he will have left not the pleasure of owning a mighty empire but the burden of sustaining its crushing weight. For, they will not be able to hold all the conquered nations in perpetual subjection. And I doubt if the Germans of future generations will entertain unadulterated pride in the deeds for which Hitlerism will be deemed responsible. They will honour Herr Hitler as a genius, as a brave man, a matchless organiser and much more. But I should hope that the Germans of the future will have learnt the art of discrimination even about their heroes. Anyway, I think it will be allowed that all the blood that has been spilled by Hitler has added not a millionth part of an inch to the world's moral stature.

As against this, imagine the state of Europe to-day if the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the French and the



English had all said to Hitler: "You need not make your scientific preparation for destruction. We will meet your violence with non-violence. You will, therefore, be able to destroy our non-violent army without tanks, battleships and airships." It may be retorted that the only difference would be that Hitler would have got without fighting what he has gained after a bloody fight. Exactly. The history of Europe would then have been written differently. Possession might (but only might) have been then taken under non-violent resistance, as it has been taken now after perpetration of untold barbarities. Under non-violence, only those would have been killed who had trained themselves to be killed, if need be, but without killing anyone and and without bearing malice towards anybody. I dare say that in that case Europe would have added several inches to its moral stature. And in the end, I expect it is the moral worth that will count. All else is dross.

I have written these lines for the European Powers. But they are meant for ourselves. If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms, but we will defend it with the force of non-violence?

—*Harijan*: June 22, 1940.

## XLII

### BOTH HAPPY AND UNHAPPY

*"Non-violence of the strong cannot be a mere policy. It must be a creed, or a passion, if 'creed' is objected to. A man with a passion expresses it in every little act of his."*

IT WAS ON THE 18th inst. that I expressed the following hope in *Harijan*:

"If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us

to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms, but we will defend it with the force of non-violence?"

On the 21st, the Working Committee felt unable to enforce such faith in action when the time for it came. For, the Committee never before had an occasion to test their faith. At the last meeting, they had to lay down a course of action for meeting impending anarchy within and danger of aggression from without.

I pleaded hard with the Committee: "If you have faith in non-violence of the strong, now is the time to act up to it. It does not matter that many parties do not believe in non-violence, whether of the strong or of the weak. Probably, that is all the greater reason for Congressmen to meet the emergency by non-violent action. For, if all were non-violent, there could be no anarchy and there would be no question of anybody arming for meeting aggression from without. It is because Congressmen represent a party of non-violence, in the midst of parties who do not believe in it, that it becomes imperative for Congressmen to show that they are well able to act up to their faith."

But the members of the Working Committee felt that Congressmen would not be able to act up to it. It would be a new experience for them. They were never before called upon to deal with such a crisis. The attempt made by me to form Peace Brigades to deal with communal riots and the like had wholly failed. Therefore, they could not hope for the action contemplated.

My position was different. With the Congress, non-violence was always a policy. It was open to it to reject it, if it failed. If it could not bring political and economic independence, it was of no use. For me, non-violence is a creed. I must act up to it whether I am alone or have companions. Since propagation of non-violence is the mission of my life, I must pursue it in all weathers. I felt that now was the time for me to prove my faith before God

and man. And so I asked for absolution from the Committee. Hitherto I have been responsible for guiding the general policy of the Congress. I could no longer do so when fundamental differences were discovered between them and me. They readily recognized the correctness of my attitude. And they gave me the absolution. Once more they have justified the trust reposed in them. They have been true to themselves. They had not the confidence in themselves or those whom they represented, that they could express in their actions the required measure of non-violence. And so they made the only choice they could honestly make. It was a tremendous sacrifice they made—the sacrifice of the prestige that the Congress had gained in the world for unadulterated non-violence, and the dissolution of the unwritten and unspoken bond between them and me. But though it is a break in the common practice of a common ideal or policy, there is no break in the friendship of over twenty years' standing.

I am both happy and unhappy over the result. Happy, because I have been able to bear the strain of the break and have been given the strength to stand alone. Unhappy, because my word seemed to lose the power to carry with me those whom it was my proud privilege to carry all these many years which seem like yesterday. But I know that, if God shows me the way to demonstrate the efficacy of non-violence of the strong, the break will prove to have been temporary. If there is no way, they will have justified their wisdom in bearing the wrench of letting me go my way alone. If that tragic discovery of my impotence is in store for me, I hope still to retain the faith that has sustained me all these years, and to have humility enough to realize that I was not fit enough instrument to carry the torch of non-violence any further.

But this argument and doubt are based upon the assumption that the members of the Working Committee represent the feeling of the vast majority of Congressmen. They would wish, and I hope, that the vast majority of Congress-

men had in them the non-violence of the strong. No one would be more glad than they to discover that they had under-rated Congressmen's strength. The probability, however, is that there is no majority, but only a good minority which represents the non-violence of the strong. It should be remembered that the matter does not lend itself to argument. The members of the Working Committee had all the argument before them. But non-violence, which is a quality of the heart, cannot come by an appeal to the brain. Therefore, what is required is a quiet but resolute demonstration of non-violent strength. The opportunity comes to everyone almost daily. There are communal clashes, there are dacoities, there are wordy duels. In all these things, those who are truly non-violent can and will demonstrate it. If it is shown in an adequate measure, it will not fail to infect their surroundings. I am quite clear that there is not a single Congressman who disbelieves in the efficacy of non-violence out of sheer cussedness. Let the Congressmen, who believe that the Congress should adhere to non-violence in dealing with internal disorders or external aggression, express it in their daily conduct. Non-violence of the strong cannot be a mere policy. It must be a creed, or a passion, if 'creed' is objected to. A man with a passion expresses it in every little act of his. Therefore, he who is possessed by non-violence will express it in the family circle, in his dealings with neighbours, in his business, in Congress meetings, in public meetings, and in his dealings with opponents. It is because it has not expressed itself in this way among Congressmen, that the members of the Working Committee rightly concluded that Congressmen were not ready for non-violent treatment of internal disorders or external aggression.\* Embarrassment

\*"I shall hope to the last that, for the sake of themselves, India, aye Britain herself, and humanity, Congressmen will resolutely decline to have anything to do with the use of arms for any of the two purposes. I feel strongly that the future of humanity lies in the hands of the Congress. May God give wisdom and courage to Congressmen to take the right step!"

—*Harijan*: July 6, 1940

caused by non-violent action would move established authority to yield to popular will. But such action has obviously no place in the face of disorders. We have to court death without retaliation and with no malice or anger towards those who bring disorder. It is easy enough to see that non-violence required here is of a wholly different type from what the Congress has known hitherto. But it is the only non-violence that is true and that can save the world from self-destruction. This is a certainty, sooner or later, sooner rather than later, if India cannot deliver the message of true non-violence to a world which wants to be saved from the curse of wars and does not know how to find the deliverance.

—*Harijan*: June 29, 1940.

#### XLIII

### TO EVERY BRITON

*"I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of relations between nations and other matters. . . . I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence."*

IN 1896, I ADDRESSED an appeal to every Briton in South Africa on behalf of my countrymen who had gone there as labourers or traders and their assistants. It had its effect. However important it was from my view-point, the cause which I pleaded then was insignificant compared with the cause which prompts this appeal. I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of relations between nations and other matters. Your statesmen

have declared that this is a war on behalf of democracy. There are many other reasons given in justification. You know them all by heart. I suggest that, at the end of the War, whichever way it ends, there will be no democracy left to represent democracy. This War has descended upon mankind as a curse and a warning. It is a curse inasmuch as it is brutalizing man on a scale hitherto unknown. All distinctions between combatants and non-combatants have been abolished. No one and nothing is to be spared. Lying has been reduced to an art. Britain was to defend small nationalities. One by one they have vanished, at least for the time being. It is also a warning. It is a warning that, if nobody reads the writing on the wall, man will be reduced to the state of the beast, whom he is shaming by his manners. I read the writing when the hostilities broke out. But I had not the courage to say the word. God has given me the courage to say it before it is too late.

I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as the Germans. If that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win the War. In other words, you will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis. No cause, however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today cannot be called just.

I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in a trial of brute strength, whether expressed through the muscle or the brain. Your muscular bravery is an established fact. Need you demonstrate that your brain is also as unrivalled in destructive power as your muscle? I hope you do not wish to enter into such an undignified competition with the Nazis. I venture to present

you with a nobler and braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself—man, woman and child—to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

The process or method, which I have called Non-violent Non-co-operation, is not without considerable success in its use in India. Your representatives in India may deny my claim. If they do, I shall feel sorry for them. They may tell you that our non-co-operation was not wholly non-violent, that it was born of hatred. If they give that testimony, I will not deny it. Had it been wholly non-violent, if all the non-co-operators had been filled with good-will towards you, I make bold to say that you, who are India's masters, would have become her pupils and, with much greater skill than we have, perfected this matchless weapon and met the German and Italian friends' menace with it. Indeed, the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently. Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations, and the orgy of hatred.

This is no appeal made by a man who does not know his business. I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life—domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfec-

tions. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search, the discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

I claim to have been a life-long and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. At one time, I used to be also a lover of your Empire. I thought that it was doing good to India. When I saw that in the nature of things it could do no good, I used, and am still using the non-violent method to fight Imperialism. Whatever the ultimate fate of my country, my love for you remains, and will remain, undiminished. My non-violence demands universal love, and you are not a small part of it. It is that love which has prompted my appeal to you.

May God give power to every word of mine! In His name I began to write this, and in His name I close it. May your statesmen have the wisdom and courage to respond to my appeal! I am telling His Excellency the Viceroy that my services are at the disposal of His Majesty's Government, should they consider them of any practical use in advancing the object of my appeal.\*

—*Harijan*: July 6, 1940.

\* The following correspondence took place between Gandhiji and the Viceroy:

*Gandhiji's letter to Lord Linlithgow dated Delhi, July 3, 1940:*

"You must have seen in the Press my public appeal to every Briton. Nevertheless, for the sake of courtesy, I enclose herewith a copy. You will note the last sentence of my appeal. Will you please convey the contents of it to the proper quarters? The appeal and the offer at the end represent my personal and humble contribution to Britain's cause. It is the best I could give."

*Lord Linlithgow's letter to Gandhiji dated Simla, July 10, 1940:*

"I duly conveyed your letter of July 3 and appeal to His Majesty's Government. I have now heard from them that, with every appreciation of your motives, they do not feel that the policy which you advocate is one which it is possible for them to consider, since in common with the whole Empire they are firmly resolved to prosecute the War to a victorious conclusion."

—*Harijan*: July 21, 1940.



## UNREPENTANT

*"I hold a new order to be impossible if the War is fought to a finish or mutual exhaustion leads to a patched-up peace."*

BY WRITING THAT *Appeal to Every Briton*, I have invited upon my head an extra load of work which without God's help I would be ill able to bear. If it is His will that I should shoulder it, He will give me the strength to carry on.

When I decided to confine myself mostly to writing in Gujarati or Hindustani, I had no notion that I would have to write the appeal. It came to me like a flash, and the courage to write it came with it. I had resisted till then all pressure from English and American friends to give guidance. But I could not see my way. Now having addressed that appeal, I must follow up the reactions to it. A large amount of correspondence is pouring in upon me. Save for one angry telegram, I had nothing but friendly criticism from Englishmen and even appreciation from some.

I was grateful to H.E. the Viceroy for forwarding my offer to his Majesty's Government. Though no better response to the appeal was to be expected, I cannot help saying that it was the knowledge of the determination to carry the War to a victorious end that had prompted my appeal. No doubt the determination is natural and worthy of the best British tradition. Nevertheless, the awful slaughter that the determination involves, should induce a search for a better and braver way to achieve the end. For, peace has its victories more glorious than those of war. The non-violent method would have meant no abject surrender. It would have confounded all modern tactics of war, indeed rendered them of no use. The new world order, which all dream of, would surely have been found.

I hold a new order to be impossible, if the war is fought to a finish or mutual exhaustion leads to a patched-up peace.

Let me, therefore, examine the argument advanced in a letter received from a friend. Here it is:

“Two English friends, who admire you, say your appeal to every Briton cannot have any effect just now. It is impossible to expect the man in the street to do a complete *volte face* with any degree of understanding — indeed, it is impossible for the understanding to do, as you say, without a heart-belief in non-violence. The time to mould a new world on your lines will be after the War. They realize your way is the right one, but they say it needs endless preparation and instruction and big leadership —none of which they possess. Regarding India, they say the attitude of the present authority is diplorable. Long ago India should have been declared as independent as Canada, and her people should be allowed to work out their own constitution. But what they are extremely perplexed about now is that you want absolute Independence straight away, and the next step you will take is ‘no further help to Britain in the prosecution of War, surrender to Germany, and opposition to her by non-violent means.’ You must explain what you mean in more detail so as to remove the misunderstanding. This is an honest reaction.”

The appeal was intended to produce the effect now. It could not come out of a mathematical calculation. If the conviction could have come, action was an easy matter. The mass mind responds under pressure. That the appeal has not produced the intended result shows that either my word has no power or that God has a purpose of which we have no knowledge. The appeal has come from an anguished heart. I could not suppress it. It was not written for the moment. I am quite sure that it enunciates a truth of eternal value.

If the ground is not prepared from now, there may be no

time left after a dismal termination of the War for evolving a new order. Whatever the order, it will be in response to a conscious or unconscious effort from now. Indeed, the effort began before my appeal. I hope that it has stimulated it, perhaps given it a definite direction. I suggest to the non-official leaders and moulders of British opinion, if they are convinced of the truth of my position, to work for its adoption. Compared to the big issue raised in my appeal, the question of Indian Independence pales into insignificance. But I hold with the two Englishmen that the British Government's attitude is deplorable. The two friends are wholly wrong in the deduction they have drawn from the assumed recognition of India's Independence. They forget that I am out of the picture. Those who are responsible for the Working Committee's last resolution have meant free India's co-operation with Britain. With them, there is no question of surrender to Germany or non-violent opposition.

But I must not here tarry on Indian Independence and its implications, tempting though the subject is.

The cuttings and correspondence before me say that the Congress rejection of my advice to abstain from preparation for military defence of India precludes me from making the appeal to Britain or from expecting a favourable response. The argument is plausible, but only plausible. The critics say that, if I have failed with my people, I have no right to expect Britain whilst she is in the midst of a life and death struggle to listen to me. I am a man with a mission. India's millions have never tasted the bitters of war as the British have. Britain, if she is to fulfil her declared purpose, needs a radical change in her policy. I feel that I know the change that is needed. My inability to persuade the Working Committee is irrelevant to the theme under discussion. There is no analogy between India's case and Britain's. I am, therefore, wholly unrepentant. I maintain that in issuing my appeal, I have acted wholly as a life-long friend of Britain.

A writer however, retorts: 'Address your appeal to

Hitler'. In the first place, I did write to Herr Hitler.\* My letter was published in the Press some time after I addressed it. In the second place, there can be no meaning in my appeal to Herr Hitler to adopt non-violence. He is marching from victory to victory. I can only appeal to him to desist. That I have done. But to Britain, which is just now on the defensive, I can present the really effective weapon of Non-violent Non-co-operation. Let my method be rejected on merits, not by bringing inapt analogies or untenable argument. The issue raised by me, I venture to think, is of universal importance. The usefulness of the non-violent method seems to be granted by all the critics. They gratuitously assume the impossibility of human nature, as it is constituted, responding to the strain involved in non-violent preparation. But that is begging the question. I say: 'You have never tried the method on any scale. In so far as it has been tried, it has shown promising results'.

—*Harijan*: July 21, 1940.

XLV

NOT QUITE SO BAD

*"As certain as I am writing this, the world has to come to the state to which I have invited Britain. Those who will be witnesses of that happy and not far-off event will recall my appeal with gladness. I know that the appeal has hastened its advent."*

A friend quotes from a letter received from an English friend:

"Do you think that Mahatma's appeal to every Briton is going to produce right reactions in the mind or heart of a single Briton? That appeal has probably created more ill-will than anything else recently. We live in

\*See The Simla Visit—P. 75.

astonishing and critical times, and it is frightfully difficult to decide what should be done. At any rate, we should try to avoid obvious dangers. So far as I can see, Mahatma's unadulterated policy must inevitably lead to disaster for India. How far he himself intends following it I do not know, for he has a wonderful way of adapting himself to his material."

Well, I happen to know that many more than one single heart have been touched by my *Appeal to Every Briton*. I know that many English friends were anxious for me to take some such step. But I do not want to take comfort from the approbation, however pleasing in itself, of English friends. What is of value for me is to know that at least one Englishman thinks as stated in the extract. Such knowledge should put me on my guard. It should make me more careful, if possible, in the selection of the words I use to express my thought. But no displeasure, even of the dearest friends, can put me off the duty I see clearly in front of me. And this duty of making the appeal was so peremptory that it was impossible for me to put it off. As certain as I am writing this, the world has to come to the state to which I have invited Britain. Those who will be witnesses of that happy and not far-off event will recall my appeal with gladness. I know that the appeal has hastened its advent.

Why should a single Briton resent an appeal to him to be braver than he is, to be better than he is in every respect? He may plead inability, but he cannot be displeased by an appeal to his nobler nature.

Why should the appeal breed any ill-will at all? There is no cause given for it by the manner or the matter of the appeal. I have not advised cessation of fight. I have advised lifting it to a plane worthy of human nature, of the divinity man shares with God Himself. If the hidden meaning of the remarks is that by making the appeal I have strengthened Nazi hands, the suggestion does not bear scrutiny. Herr Hitler can only be confounded by the

adoption by Britain of the novel method of fighting. At one single stroke, he will find that all his tremendous armament has been put out of action. A warrior lives on his wars, whether offensive or defensive. He suffers a collapse, if he finds that his warring capacity is unwanted.

My appeal is not from a coward to brave people to shed their bravery, nor is a mockery from a fair-weather friend to one in distress. I suggest to the writer to re-read my appeal in the light of my explanation.

One thing Herr Hitler, as every critic, may say. I am a fool without any knowledge of the world or human nature. That would be a harmless certificate which need excite neither ill-will nor anger. It would be harmless because I have earned such certificates before now. This one would be the latest of the many editions, and I hope not the last, for my foolish experiments have not yet ended.

So far as India is concerned, my unadulterated policy can never harm her, if she adopts it. If India as a whole rejects it, there can be no harm accruing except to those who may foolishly pursue it. The correspondent has lighted upon my strong point when he says: 'Mahatma has a wonderful way of adapting himself to his material'. My instinctive knowledge of my material has given me a faith which cannot be moved. I feel within me that the material is ready. My instinct has not betrayed me once. But I must not build much upon past experience. 'One step enough for me'.

—*Harijan*: July 28, 1940.

## XLVI

## A FLAW IN AHIMSA

*"Let us not make light of a force of the subtlest kind like Ahimsa, and let us try to discover its hidden power with patience and faith."*

Q. You have appealed to Britons to lay down arms and to adopt non-violence. But that raises a moral difficulty. A's *ahimsa* provokes B to *himsa* and makes him impervious to appeal to his heart. If a non-violent man comes against an inanimate thing, his non-violence will have no effect on it. There is, therefore, some flaw somewhere in your belief. It is likely that *ahimsa* may have success in a restricted field. If so, what use is it for universal purposes? Your claim, therefore, of its universal use falls to the ground.

A. *Ahimsa* cannot be dismissed so lightly as you think. *Ahimsa* is the strongest force known. But if all can use the strongest force with equal ease, it would lose its importance. We have not been able yet to discover the true measure of the innumerable properties of an article of daily use like water. Some of its properties fill us with wonder. Let us not, therefore, make light of a force of the subtlest kind like *ahimsa* and let us try to discover its hidden power with patience and faith. Within a brief space of time, we have carried to a fairly successful conclusion a great experiment in the use of this force. As you know, I have not set much store by it. Indeed, I have hesitated even to call it an experiment in *ahimsa*. But according to the legend, as Rama's name was enough to float stones, even so the movement carried on in the name of *ahimsa* brought about a great awakening in the country and carried us ahead. It is difficult to forecast the possibilities when men with unflinching faith carry this experiment further forward. To say those who use violence are all insensible is an exaggeration. Some do seem to lose their senses, but we are bound to be mistaken if we try to base a moral law on those exceptions. The safest course is to lay down laws on the strength of our usual experience, and our usual experience is that in most cases non-violence is the real antidote of violence, and it is safe to infer from it that the highest violence can be met by the highest non-violence.

But let us consider for a moment inanimate objects. He

will surely break his head who strikes it against a stone. But supposing a stone comes against us through space, we can escape it by stepping aside, or if there is nowhere to step aside, we can bravely stay where we are and receive the stone. That will mean minimum injury and, in case it proves fatal, the death will not be as painful as it would be if we made an effort to ward it off.

Extend the thought a little further, and it is easy to see that, if a senseless man is left alone and no one tries to resist him, he is sure to exhaust himself. Indeed, it is not quite inconceivable that the loving sacrifice of many may bring an insane man to his senses. Instances are not wanting of absolutely insane people having come back to their senses.

—*Harijan*: July 28, 1940.

#### XLVII

### WHAT SHOULD A BRITON DO AND NOT DO?

*"A Satyagrahi is dead to his body even before the enemy attempts to kill i.e. he is free from attachment to his body and only lives in the victory of the soul. Therefore, when he is already thus dead, why should he yearn to kill anyone?"*

Q. In your appeal to 'Every Briton' you say:

"You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want. You will give all your 'earthly possessions' but never your souls or your minds. You will refuse to own allegiance to them."

Please explain clearly what a Briton should or should not do. I ask the question because your answer will have a bearing on the duty of every *satyagrahi*.

A. Not to yield your soul to the conqueror means that



you will refuse to do that which your conscience forbids you to do. Suppose the 'enemy' were to ask you to rub your nose on the ground, or to pull your ears or to go through such humiliating performances, you will not submit to any of these humiliations. But if he robs you of your possessions, you will yield them because, as a votary of *ahimsa*, you have from the beginning decided that earthly possessions have nothing to do with your soul. That which you look upon as your own, you may keep only so long as the world allows you to own it.

Not to yield your mind means that you will not give way to any temptation. Man is often times weak-minded enough to be caught in the snare of greed and honeyed words. We see this happening daily in our social life. A weak-minded man can never be a *satyagrahi*. The latter's 'no' is invariably a 'no', and his 'yes' an eternal 'yes'. Such a man alone has the strength to be a devotee of truth and *ahimsa*. But here one must know the difference between steadfastness and obstinacy. If after having said 'yes' or 'no', one finds out that the decision was wrong and in spite of that knowledge clings to it, that is obstinacy and folly. It is necessary to think things out carefully and thoroughly before coming to any decision.

The meaning of refusal to own allegiance is clear. You will not bow to the supremacy of the victor, you will not help him to attain his object. Herr Hitler has never dreamt of possessing Britain. He wants the British to admit defeat. The victor can then demand anything he likes from the vanquished, and the latter has perforce to yield. But if defeat is not admitted, the enemy will fight until he has killed his opponent. A *satyagrahi*, however, is dead to his body even before the enemy attempts to kill him, *i.e.*, he is free from attachment to his body and only lives in the victory of the soul. Therefore, when he is already thus dead, why should he yearn to kill anyone? To die in the act of killing is in essence to die defeated. Because, if the enemy is unable to get what he wants from you alive, he

will decide to get it after killing you. If, on the other hand, he realizes that you have not the remotest thought in your mind of raising your hand against him, even for the sake of your life, he will lack the zest to kill you. Every hunter has had this experience. No one has ever heard of anyone hunting cows.

You may find that I have not answered the questions that you had in your mind. I have made a humble effort and dealt with your general question by giving you a few homely examples. I hope that from them you will be able to deduce answers to the questions left unanswered.

Dignity of the soul and self-respect are interpreted differently by different persons. I am aware that self-respect is often misinterpreted. The over-sensitive man may see disrespect or hurt in almost everything. Such a man does not really understand what self-respect is. That has been my experience in many cases. But no harm accrues even if a non-violent man holds mistaken notions of self-respect. He can die cheerfully for the sake of what he believes to be his dignity and self-respect. Only he has no right to injure or kill the supposed wrong-doer.

—*Harijan*: Aug. 18, 1940.

## XLVIII

## THE BEST FIELD FOR AHIMSA

*"The alphabet of ahimsa is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere else. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him."*

LAST WEEK I WROTE about three fields for the operation of

*ahimsa*.<sup>\*</sup> I propose to invite attention to-day to the fourth and the best field for the operation of non-violence. This is the family field, in a wider sense than the ordinary. Thus, members of an institution should be regarded as a family. Non-violence, as between the members of such families, should be easy to practise. If that fails, it means that we have not developed the capacity for pure non-violence. For, the love we have to practise towards our relatives or colleagues in our family or institution, we have to practise towards our foes, dacoits, etc. If we fail in one case, success in the other is a chimera.

We have generally assumed that, though it may not be possible to exercise non-violence in the domestic field, it is possible to do so in the political field. This has proved a pure delusion. We have chosen to describe our methods adopted so far as non-violence, and thus caricatured non-violence itself. If non-violence it was, it was such poor stuff that it proved useless at the critical moment. The alphabet of *ahimsa* is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that, if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere else. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him.

It will be retorted that those who satisfy such a test of non-violence will be few and far between. It is quite likely, but that is no reply to my proposition. Those who profess to believe in non-violence should know the impli-

\* "Non-violence in its operation against constituted authority is one field. We have exercised this up to now with a fair amount of success, and I have always described it as the non-violence of the weak. . . . .

"The other field is the exercise of *ahimsa* in internal disturbances—Hindu-Muslim riots and the like. We have not been able to show visible success in the exercise of *ahimsa* in this field. . . . But it is clear that this non-violence is not the non-violence of the weak.

"The man or woman who can display this non-violence of the brave can easily stand against external invasion. This is the third field for the exercise of non-violence."

—*Hartian*: July 14, 1940

cations of that belief. And if these scare them away, they are welcome to give up the belief. Now that the Congress Working Committee has made the position clear, it is necessary that those who claim to believe in non-violence should know what is expected of them. If, as a result, the ranks of the non-violent army thin down, it should not matter. An army, however small, of truly non-violent soldiers is likely some day to multiply itself. An army of those who are not truly non-violent is never likely to yield any use, whether it increases or decreases.

Let no one understand from the foregoing that a non-violent army is open only to those who strictly enforce in their lives all the implications of non-violence. It is open to all those who accept the implications and make an ever-increasing endeavour to observe them. There never will be an army of perfectly non-violent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe non-violence. For the last fifty years I have striven to make my life increasingly non-violent and to inspire my co-workers in the same direction, and I think I have had a fair amount of success. The growing darkness around, far from damping my zeal and dimming my faith, brightens them, and makes the implications of non-violence more clearly visible to me.

.—*Harijan*: July 21, 1940.

#### XLIX

### HOW TO CULTIVATE AHIMSA?

*“If non-violence in the domestic field is successfully achieved, we shall surely see the non-violence against the constituted authority revived in its purified form, and it will be irresistible.”*

Q. What is the good of your crying “*ahimsa, ahimsa*” in

season and out of season? Will it by itself teach people to be non-violent? Would it not be better, instead, to tell people how pure *ahimsa*, or the *ahimsa* of the strong, can be cultivated?

A. Yours is a very timely and opportune question. I have attempted before this, on more occasions than one, to answer it. But my effort has, I confess, been rather desultory. I have not concentrated upon it, or given it the weight I might have. This was all right while I was devoting all my energy to forging means to give battle to the Government. But it had the result of retarding the growth of pure *ahimsa*, so that to-day we are not even within ken of the *ahimsa* of the strong. If we want to advance further, we ought, atleast for some time, to completely forget the idea of offering non-violent resistance to constituted authority. If non-violence in the domestic field is successfully achieved, we shall surely see the non-violence against constituted authority revived in its purified form, and it will be irresistible.

Now that I am no longer in the Congress, I may not offer civil disobedience even in my own person in its name. But I am certainly free to offer civil disobedience in my individual capacity, whenever it may be necessary to. No one need suppose that all civil disobedience will necessarily be taboo, while the country is still being educated in the *ahimsa* of the strong. But those who may want to join the non-violent force of my conception should not entertain any immediate prospect of civil disobedience. They should understand that, so long as they have not realized *ahimsa* in their own person in its pure form, there can be no civil disobedience for them.

Let not the mention of pure *ahimsa* frighten anybody. If we have its matchless efficacy, it will not be found to be so hard to practise as it is sometimes supposed to be. It will be well to remember the immortal *Mahabharata* verse in this connection. The Seer-Poet therein loudly pro-

claims to the whole world that *Dharma* includes within itself both legitimate *Artha* and *Kama*, and asks why men do not follow the royal road of *Dharma* that leads to both earthly and spiritual bliss. *Dharma* here does not signify mere observance of externals. It signifies the way of truth and non-violence. The scriptures have given us two immortal maxims. One of these is: "*Ahimsa* is the supreme Law or *Dharma*." The other is: "There is no other Law or *Dharma* than Truth." These two maxims provide us the key to all lawful *Artha* and *Kama*. Why should we then hesitate to act up to them? Strange as it may appear, the fact remains that people find the easiest of this oftentimes to be most difficult to follow. The reason, to borrow a term from the science of physics, lies in our inertia. Physicists tell us that inertia is an essential, and in its own place a most useful, quality of matter. It is that alone which steadies the universe and prevents it from flying off at a tangent. But for it, the latter would be a chaos of motion. But inertia becomes an incubus and a vice when it ties the mind down to old ruts. It is this kind of inertia which is responsible for our rooted prejudice that to practise pure *ahimsa* is difficult. It is up to us to get rid of this incubus. The first step in this direction is firmly to resolve that all untruth and *himsa* shall hereafter be taboo to us, whatever sacrifice it might seem to involve. For, the good these may seem to achieve is in appearance only, but in reality it is deadly poison. If our resolve is firm and our conviction clear, it would mean half the battle won, and the practice of these two qualities would come comparatively easy to us.

Let us confine ourselves to *ahimsa*. We have all along regarded the spinning wheel, village crafts, etc. as the pillars of *ahimsa*, and so indeed they are. They must stand. But we have now to go a step further. A votary of *ahimsa* will of course base upon non-violence, if he has not already done so, all his relations with his parents, his children, his wife, his servants, his dependants, etc. But

the real test will come at the time of political or communal disturbances or under the menace of thieves and dacoits. Mere resolve to lay down one's life under the circumstances is not enough. There must be the necessary qualification for making the sacrifice. If I am a Hindu, I must fraternize with the Mussalmans and the rest. In my dealings with them, I may not make any distinction between my co-religionists and those who might belong to a different faith. I would seek opportunities to serve them without any feeling of fear or un-naturalism. The word 'fear' can have no place in the dictionary of *ahimsa*. Having thus qualified himself by his selfless service, a votary of pure *ahimsa* will be in a position to make a fit offering of himself in a communal conflagration. Similarly, to meet the menace of thieves and dacoits, he will need to go among, and cultivate friendly relations with, the communities from which thieves and dacoits generally come. . . . There is an almost unlimited field for this kind of work, and it does not call for any other talent in one besides pure love.

—*Harijan*: July 21, 1940.

## L

### PLEA FOR FAITH AND PERSEVERANCE

*"We have to live and move and have our being in ahimsa, even as Hitler does in himsa. It is the faith and the perseverance and single-mindedness with which he has perfected his weapons of destruction that commands my admiration."*

NO ONE KNOWS my imperfections better than I, but what little power I possess is derived from my *ahimsa*. What is it but my *ahimsa* that draws thousands of women to me in

fearless confidence? But neither you\* nor I can trade on our capital. We have to be up and doing every moment of our lives, and go forward in our *sadhana*. We have to live and move and have our being in *ahimsa* even as Hitler does in *himsa*. It is the faith and perseverance and single-mindedness with which he has perfected his weapons of destruction that commands my admiration. That he uses them as a monster is immaterial for our purpose. We have to bring to bear the same single-mindedness and perseverance in evolving our *ahimsa*. Hitler is awake all the 24 hours of the day in perfecting his *sadhana*. He wins because he pays the price. His inventions surprise his enemies. But it is his single-minded devotion to his purpose that should be the object of our admiration and emulation. Although he works all his waking hours, his intellect is unclouded and unerring. Are our intellects unclouded and unerring? A mere belief in *ahimsa* or the *charkha* will not do. It should be intelligent and creative. If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of non-violence.

The Working Committee's decision was simply an echo of the atmosphere around them. My decision could not be its echo. For *ahimsa* is my special *sadhana*, not that of the Congress. I congratulate the members on their honesty and their courage, though I am sorry for myself that I could not inspire them with confidence in our creed and in my leadership. We have now to show that we have faith in the non-violence of the brave. It does not mean the development of the capacity to go to jail. It means increasing faith in the potency of constructive work to bring about *Swaraj*, and in constructive work being a vital part of the programme of *ahimsa*.

In placing civil disobedience before constructive work I was wrong, and I did not profit by the Himalayan blunder that I had committed. I feared that I should estrange my

\* Reference is to the members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh.



co-workers, and so carried on with imperfect *ahimsa*. But I am not sorry for my blunders. My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents, and I lay them both at His feet. Why should He have chosen me, an imperfect instrument, for such a mighty experiment? I think He deliberately did so. He had to serve the poor dumb ignorant millions. A perfect man might have been their despair. When they found that one with their failings was marching on towards *ahimsa*, they, too, had confidence in their own capacity. We should not have recognized a perfect man if he had come as our leader, and we might have driven him to a cave. Maybe, he who follows me will be more perfect and you will be able to receive his message. Maybe, some one of you may be that perfect teacher who is to come.

—*Harijan*: July 21, 1940.

## LI

### AN IMPOSSIBLE IDEAL

*"That State is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least. The European democracies are, to my mind, a negation of democracy."*

Q. Does anyone know true non-violence?

A. Nobody knows it, for nobody can practise perfect non-violence.

Q. Then, how can it be used in politics?

A. It can be used in politics precisely as it can be used in the domestic sphere. We may not be perfect in our use of it, but we definitely discard the use of violence, and grow from failure to success.

Q. You should govern non-violently. But all legislation is violence?

A. No, not all legislation . Legislation imposed by people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society. A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy.

Q. Do you think it is a realizable ideal?

A. Yes. It is realizable to the extent non-violence is realizable. That State is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least. The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence. The European democracies are, to my mind, a negation of democracy.

Q. Do you think that non-violence of the democracy which you visualize was ever realized in the olden times?

A. I do not know. But if it was not, it only means that we had never made the attempt to realize the highest in use. I have no doubt in my mind that at some stage we were wiser, and that we have to grow wiser than we are to-day in order to find what beauties are hidden in human nature. Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives.

—*Harijan*: July 21, 1940.

## LII

### MANKIND AND NON-VIOLENCE

*"The present War is the saturation point in violence. It spells, to my mind, also its doom. Daily I have testimony of the fact that ahimsa was never before appreciated by mankind as it is today."*

IF WE TURN OUR EYES to the time of which history has any

record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards *ahimsa*. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and they began to live on chase. Next came a stage when man was ashamed of leading the life of a wandering hunter. He, therefore, took to agriculture and depended principally on Mother Earth for his food. Thus, from being a nomad he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive *ahimsa* and diminishing *himsa*. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.

Prophets and *avatars* have also taught the lesson of *ahimsa*, more or less. Not one of them has professed to teach *himsa*. And how should it be otherwise? *Himsa* does not need to be taught. Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards *ahimsa*, or rushes to his doom. That is why the prophets and *avatars* have taught the lessons of truth, harmony, brotherhood, justice, etc.—all attributes of *ahimsa*.

If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards *ahimsa*, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it be God Himself.

The present War is the saturation point in violence. It spells, to my mind, also its doom. Daily I have testimony of the fact that *ahimsa* was never before appreciated by mankind as it is to-day. All the testimony from the West that I continue to receive points in the same direction. The Congress has pledged itself to *ahimsa*, however limited. I invite the doubters to shed their doubts and plunge confi-

clently into the sacred sacrificial fire of *ahimsa*. Then, I have little doubt that the Congress will retrace its step. "It is always willin'." Well has Pritam, our poet, sung:

*"Happiest are those that plunge in the Fire.*

*The lookers-on are all but scorched by flames."*

*Harijan*: Aug. 11, 1940.

### LIII

#### WHAT OF THE "WEAK MAJORITY"?

*"In seeking to avenge the wrong by the wrong method of violence brought to very near perfection, Hitler has brutalized not only Germans but a large part of humanity."*

PROF. TIMUR, of Islamia College, Peshawar, writes:

"The world is indebted to you for revealing to it in these hard times the hidden values of non-violence. The experiment which you want to make, of defending India against foreign aggression without the use of arms, would be the boldest moral experiment of all times. There are two possible results of such a course. Either the conscience of the invaders may be awakened by the love of the invaded and they may repent of their sin. Or, the proud invaders may take non-violence as a sign of physical weakness and degeneration and may think it right to subjugate, rule over, and exploit, a weak people. This is the doctrine of Nietzsche which is followed in practice by Hitler. A great loss is involved in such conquest of the physically weak by the physically strong. A few strong-willed members of the conquered nation may refuse to own allegiance to the conquerors, but the large majority always submits and adopts servile manners to preserve

its existence. Among them may be found great scientists, philosophers and artists. Genius and moral strength are not always combined in the same man. The strong man does not need armies to defend his liberty. He sacrifices his body to preserve his soul. Such men are, however, few and far between. It is the weak majority which needs protection. The question is how to protect it by non-violent methods. This is the real difficulty which every patriot feels when he thinks of adopting non-violence for the defence of his country."

The "weak majority" no doubt needs protection. If all were soldiers either of *ahimsa* or *himsa*, no such questions as call for discussion in these columns would arise. There is always a "weak majority" that would want protection against man's mischief. The orthodox method we know. Nazism is its logical outcome. It is an answer to a definite want. A terrible wrong wantonly perpetrated against a whole nation cried out for redress. And Hitler arose to avenge it. Whatever the ultimate fortune of the War, Germany will not be humiliated again. Humanity will not stand a second outrage. But in seeking to avenge the wrong by the wrong method of violence brought to very near perfection, Hitler has brutalized not only Germans but a large part of humanity. The end of it we have not yet reached. For Britain, so long as she holds to the orthodox method, has to copy the Nazi methods if she is to put up a successful defence. Thus, the logical outcome of the violent method seems to be increasingly to brutalize man, including "the weak majority". For, it has to give its defenders the required measure of co-operation.

Now imagine the same majority defended after the method of non-violence. As it admits of no grossness, no fraud, no malice, it must raise the moral tone of the defenders. Hence, there will be a corresponding rise in the moral tone of the "weak majority" to be defended. No doubt there will be difference in degree, but not in kind.

But the snag comes in when we consider the ways and means of working the non-violent method. In working the other, there is no difficulty in getting the human material. Therefore, that way seems easy. In getting non-violent defenders, we have to pick and choose. Money cannot buy them. The non-violent process is wholly different from the one commonly known. I can only say that my own experience, in organizing non-violent action for half a century, fills me with hope for the future. It has succeeded in a marked measure in protecting the "weak majority". But half a century is nothing in discovering the hidden possibilities of this force and working them out. Those, therefore, like the correspondent, who are attracted to non-violence, should, according to their ability and opportunity, join the experiment. It has entered upon a most interesting, though at the same time a most difficult, stage. I am myself sailing on uncharted waters. I have to take soundings every half-hour. The difficulty only braces me for the struggle.

—*Harijan*: Aug. 11, 1940.

## LIV

## A WRONG ANALOGY

*"Supposing a mouse in fighting a cat tried to resist the cat with his sharp beak, would you call that mouse violent? In the same way, for the Poles to stand valiantly against the German hordes, vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence."*

Q. If, as you have said, Polish resistance to the German invasion was almost non-violent, and you would thus seem

to reconcile yourself with it, why do you object to the Wardha Resolution\* of the Working Committee?

A. Surely, there is no analogy between the two cases. If a man fights with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits armed to the teeth, I should say he is fighting almost non-violently. Haven't I said to our women that, if in defence of their honour they used their nails and teeth and even a dagger, I should regard their conduct non-violent? She does know the distinction between *himsa* and *ahimsa*. She acts spontaneously. Supposing a mouse in fighting a cat tried to resist the cat with his sharp beak, would you call that mouse violent? In the same way, for the Poles to stand valiantly against the German hordes, vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence. I should not mind repeating that statement over and over again. You must give its full value to the word 'almost'. But we are 400 millions here. If we were to organize a big army and prepare ourselves to fight foreign aggression, how could we by any stretch of imagination call ourselves almost non-violent, let alone non-violent? The Poles were unprepared for the way in which the enemy swooped down upon them. When we talk of armed preparation, we contemplate preparation to meet any violent combination with our superior violence. If India ever prepared herself that way, she would constitute the greatest menace to world peace. For, if we take that path, we will also have to choose the path of exploitation like the European nations.

—*Harijan*: Aug. 25, 1940.

#### LV

#### ADMINISTERING NON-VIOLENTLY

*"That State will be the best governed which is*

\*Omitted.

*governed the least. The pity is that no one trusts me with the reins of Government. Otherwise, I would show how to govern non-violently. If I maintain a police force, it will be a body of reformers."*

Q. How will you run your administration non-violently?

A. If you assume that we would have won independence by non-violent means, it meant that the bulk of the country had been organized non-violently. Without the vast majority of people having become non-violent, we could not attain non-violent *Swaraj*. If, therefore, we attain *Swaraj* by purely non-violent means, it should not be difficult for us to carry on the administration without the military. The *goondas*, too, will then have come under our control. If, for instance, in Sevagram we have five or seven *goondas* in a population of seven hundred who are non-violently organized, the five or seven will either live under the discipline of the rest or leave the village.

But you will see that I am answering the question with the utmost caution, and my truth makes me admit that we might have to maintain a police force. But the police will be after our pattern, and not the British pattern. As we shall have adult suffrage, the voice of even the youngest of us will count. That is why I have said that ideally non-violent State will be an ordered anarchy. That State will be the best governed which is governed the least. The pity is that no one trusts me with the reins of government. Otherwise, I would show how to govern non-violently. If I maintain a police force, it will be a body of reformers.

—*Harijan*: Aug. 25, 1940.



## MY IDEAL OF A POLICE FORCE

*"The police of my conception will be of a wholly different pattern from the present day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. . . . The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact, the policemen will be reformers."*

A FRIEND WRITES as follows:

"... Can we envisage an order of society in which we will not have to resort to *himsa* in any form whatsoever? Suppose, for argument's sake, that there exists a society where the majority does not possess goods that would excite envy and where everyone has the wherewithal to live contentedly. Even then, it does not seem possible that there will be no disputes over proprietorship of land, lending and borrowing of money, and other business dealings. For these, therefore, we must provide the means of justice and see that the decisions of the courts or arbitration boards are carried out. For this, it will be essential to have a police force. You have yielded this point. But I should like to know what restrictions you would place on the police force. If there were a non-violent Government in power to-day, would it use the police force for quelling internal disorders? And are you willing to maintain it for all time or only temporarily? My mind refuses to go so far as to envisage a time when a police force will be superfluity. There seems to me to be no escape from placing this limitation, as it were, on *ahimsa*."

So long as we are not saturated with pure *ahimsa*, we cannot possibly win *Swaraj* through non-violence. We

can come into power only when the large majority of people are willing to abide by the law of *ahimsa*. When this happy state prevails, the spirit of violence will have come under control.

Nevertheless, I have conceded that even in a non-violent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect *ahimsa*. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force as I have in respect of an army. Of course, I can and do envisage a state where the police will not be necessary; but whether we shall succeed in realizing it, the future alone will show.

The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present-day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact, the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits. Quarrels between labour and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a non-violent State, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society. Similarly, there will be no room for communal disturbances. Then, we must remember that when such a Congress Government comes into power, the large majority of men and women of 21 years and over will have been enfranchised. The rigid and cramped constitution of to-day has, of course, no place in this picture.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 1, 1940.

## NON-VIOLENCE OF THE BRAVE

*"The bravery of the non-violent is vastly superior to that of the violent. The badge of the violent is his weapon—spear, or sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the non-violent."*

## A CORRESPONDENT WRITES:

"You say non-violence is for the brave, not for cowards. But, in my opinion, in India the brave are conspicuous by their absence. Even if we claim to be brave, how is the world to believe us when it knows that India has no arms and is, therefore, incapable of defending herself? What then should we do to cultivate non-violence of the brave?"

The correspondent is wrong in thinking that in India the brave are conspicuous by their absence. It is a matter for shame that, because foreigners once labelled us as cowards, we should accept the label. Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at the beginning. Again, it is wrong to say that the world to-day believes us to be cowards. It has ceased to think so since the *satyagraha* campaign. The Congress prestige has risen very high in the West during the past twenty years. The world is watching with astonished interest the fact that, although we have no arms, we are hoping to win *Swaraj*, and have indeed come very near it. Moreover, it sees in our non-violent movement rays of hope for peace in the world and its salvation from the hell of carnage. The bulk of mankind has come to believe that, if ever the spirit of revenge is to vanish and bloody

wars are to cease, the happy event can happen only through the policy of non-violence adopted by the Congress. The correspondent's fear and suspicion are, therefore, unfounded.

It will now be seen that the fact that India is unarmed is no obstacle in the path of *ahimsa*. The forcible disarmament of India by the British Government was indeed a grave wrong and a cruel injustice. But we can turn even injustice to our advantage, if god be with us, or if you prefer, we have the skill to do so. And, such a thing has happened in India.

Arms are surely unnecessary for a training in *ahimsa*. In fact, the arms, if any, have to be thrown away, as the Khansahab\* did in the Frontier Province. Those who hold that it is essential to learn violence before we can learn non-violence, would hold that only sinners can be saints.

Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training of non-violence. Violence does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering the means of combating the cause of fear. Non-violence, on the other hand, has no cause for fear. The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. He reckons not if he should lose his land, his wealth, his life. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practise *ahimsa* to perfection. The votary of *ahimsa* has only one fear, that is of God. He, who seeks refuge in God, ought to have a glimpse of the *Atman* that transcends the body; and the moment one has a glimpse of the Imperishable *Atman*, one sheds the love of perishable body. Training in non-violence is thus diametrically opposed to training in violence. Violence is needed for the protection of things external, non-violence is needed for the protection of the *Atman*, for the protection of one's honour.

\* Khan Abdul Gaffarkhan, popularly known as the "Frontier Gandhi".

This non-violence cannot be learnt by staying at home. It needs enterprise. In order to test ourselves, we should learn to dare danger and death, mortify the flesh, and acquire the capacity to endure all manner of hardships. He who trembles or takes to his heels the moment he sees two people fighting is not non-violent, but a coward. A non-violent person will lay down his life in preventing such quarrels. The bravery of the non-violent is vastly superior to that of the violent. The badge of the violent is his weapon—spear, or sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the non-violent.

This is not a course of training for one intending to learn non-violence. But it is easy to evolve one from the principles I have laid down.

It will be evident from the foregoing that there is no comparison between the two types of bravery. The one is limited, the other is limitless. There is no such thing as out-daring or out-fighting non-violence. Non-violence is invincible. There need be no doubt that this non-violence can be achieved. The history of the past twenty years should be enough to reassure us.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 1, 1940.

#### LVIII

#### HOW TO QUENCH IT?

*"If India can win Swaraj non-violently, even while this conflagration is going on, the latter is bound to be extinguished by that one event."*

ELSEWHERE THE READER will see "A Seeker's" letter\* in

The Editor: *Harijan*

Sir,

You must be reading in the papers how the war between Germany and England is being waged. Aeroplanes filled with thousands

which he has asked a question which must have occurred to everyone. The beauty lies in the way in which he has introduced the question. He has depicted the present conflagration in such lurid colours that violence cannot but stink in our nostrils. The reader is surely instinctively to exclaim: 'Even if it were possible to win the kingdom of the world by means of such violence, I would not have it.'

But this exclamation will be of no avail to quench the conflagration. No doubt it will some day quench itself, but it means mutual fratricidal slaughter like that of the Yadavas of old, who destroyed themselves and relieved the earth of so much burden. And such a consummation would any day be preferable to a perpetual conflagration. But no one would wish for this. What one would devoutly wish for is some brave step to stop the conflagration before there is total destruction. This can only be a non-violent step. How and when it can be taken has to be discovered. The "Seeker" will be satisfied when the discovery is made. In my opinion, the discovery has already been made. If India can win *Swaraj* non-violently, even while this con-

of incendiary bombs do untold havoc, and newspapers and broadcasts describe with pleasure the amount of injury each side is able to inflict on the other. The general public is consoled by being told that the damage done in the enemy country is greater than what the enemy has done in theirs. It is said that military objectives are the sole targets of the raiders: but it is impossible to believe that, flying at great heights and often through smoke screens, the bombers can really take proper aim. And, then, we hear from both sides of the 'successful' blockades, the object of which is to spread famine; and famine must necessarily, more than even bombs, hurt the civilian population.

Is it impossible for these belligerents to think in terms of humanity and stop this carnage? How can any good ever come out of war? And must we not, therefore, declare ourselves unreservedly against war for or against anybody or any ideology?

There must be many godly people in the warring countries who think in this way, but have not the strength to raise their voice in protest. May we not help them to do so and at the same time rouse the sleeping conscience of all thinking people?

Yours,  
A Seeker

flagration is going on, the latter is bound to be extinguished by that one event. That being my firm faith, I fought the Wardha Resolution tooth and nail, and secured my freedom — not indeed to tickle my vanity, but for the success of the experiment. And if I have to forego this freedom — as is quite likely — it will be for the same purpose.

We read in our religious books that whenever, in the days of old, all ordinary means failed to secure release from an ordeal or a calamity, people resorted to *tapasya* (penance) *i.e.* actually burnt themselves. I do not regard these stories as legendary. *Tapasya* is of various kinds. Misguided men can resort to it, as we find them doing to-day. The wise also can do it. It is worthwhile understanding the implication of *tapasya*. It was by dint of *tapasya* that Western scientists made their discoveries. *Tapasya* does not simply consist of betaking oneself to the forest and sitting down there surrounded by blazing fires. That *tapasya* may even be the height of folly. We have, therefore, to discriminate.

The question asked by "A Seeker" does not arise out of despair. It is intended to quicken the conscience of those who believe in *ahimsa*. I have already shown the way. It is the fulfilment of the thirteen-fold constructive programme described in a recent article.\* Those who will carry it out in faith, in full knowledge, and without the slightest fuss will have done their share in the *tapasya* to quench the conflagration. They will achieve two ends at the same time. They will make India free, and will also quench the conflagration. It is likely that the number of such people is limited, so limited that it can have no effect. I have maintained that, even if there is one individual who is almost completely non-violent, he can put out the conflagration. But I have suggested a *tapasya* which can easily be performed by the average individual. In this age of democracy, it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a sup-

\* Omitted.

remely powerful individual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate strength. An individual's success will be like a millionaire doling free food to millions of starving people. We should, therefore, bend our energies to a fulfilment of the thirteen-fold constructive programme. It may or may not bring *Swaraj*, but we shall surely have the satisfaction of having done our best.

There is a warning in the "Seeker's" letter, to which I should like to draw the reader's attention. He says papers and broadcasts describe with devilish pleasure the amount of injury each is able to inflict upon the other, and suggests that such news should sicken people instead of providing pleasure, if they are to take part in the propagation of peace. I agree. Such people will not be able to carry out even the constructive programme, for they will have no faith in it.

However that may be, it is as clear as day-light that, if this conflagration is to be put out through non-violent effort, it will be done by India.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 8, 1940.

# LIX

## "SUPPOSE GERMANY WINS"

*"Personally I think the end of this giant War will be what happened in the fabled Mahabharata War... The warring nations are destroying themselves with such fury and ferocity that the end will be mutual exhaustion. The victor will share the fate that awaited the surviving Pandavas."*

"Suppose Germany wins with India not having entered the War, would Hitler leave India alone? Certainly not, my dear Gandhi. He will have a greater say in



India than what Britain has now. The difference is this. You can fight the Englishman, but you cannot fight the German once he puts his foot on India's soil. Civil disobedience is the terror of the Englishman, it is the daily bread of the Nazi."

This is a question extracted from a very long and earnest letter from an English correspondent from South Africa. The first fallacy is that India is assumed not to have entered the War when, to all intents and purposes, she is in the War in spite of the powerful protest of the Congress. She is so much in the War that Great Britain is effectively using all the fighting material which her generals have brought into being and trained, and is draining all the money she can. Politically-minded Indians have never been trained except for doing the rulers' clerical work. They are certainly holding themselves aloof, until certain obviously necessary conditions are fulfilled. I do not see how they can be blamed for demanding the very liberty in defence of which the Allied Powers are said to be fighting. What Indians can do, even if their demand is accepted, is to give their moral weight to the struggle. This the rulers evidently do not care for. It cannot, in their opinion, turn the scales in their favour. Moral values do not count when each party swears by its material and physical resources. The Congress, with all the will in the world to defeat Nazism, cannot thrust its help on Great Britain, which evidently does not want it or about which it is at least indifferent. If, therefore, Great Britain suffers defeat, it will not be for want of Congress co-operation, but for causes over which the Congress can have no control.

If the Nazis come to India, the Congress will give them the same fight that it has given Great Britain. I do not underrate the power of *satyagraha* as the questioner does. But that is pure speculation. Imperialism has kept its grip on India for more than 150 years. If it is overthrown by a worst type of rule, the Congress can have the negative

satisfaction of knowing that no other 'ism' can possibly last beyond a few years even if it establishes a foothold in India. That is as I read the Congress mind. Personally, I think, the end of this giant War will be what happened in the fabled *Mahabharata* War. The *Mahabharata* has been aptly described by a Travancorian as the Permanent History of Man. What is described in that great epic is happening today before our very eyes. The warring nations are destroying themselves with such fury and ferocity that the end will be mutual exhaustion. The victor will share the fate that awaited the surviving Pandavas. The mighty warrior Arjuna was looted in broad daylight by a petty robber. And out of this holocaust must arise a new order for which the exploited millions of toilers have so long thirsted. The prayers of peace lovers cannot go in vain. *Satyagraha* is itself an unmistakable mute prayer of an agonized soul.

—*Harijan*: February 15, 1942.

## LX

## ON ITS TRIAL

*"In spite of the fierce criticism, which has been levelled against my letter 'To Every Briton,' I adhere to every word of it, and I am convinced that posterity will adopt the remedy suggested therein against violence, however organized and fierce."*

"I am a pacifist still in one sense; that is to say, I realize that Christians should be able to meet material force with spiritual power. It is horrifying to reflect that after nineteen hundred years, we are still unable to do it except in individual cases and on a small scale. But to me it seems merely 'wishful thinking' to act as

though we had a power which in fact we have not, and for which we have neither trained nor disciplined ourselves in the past. Such power does not come to those who have not disciplined themselves, at the last moment, in the hour of need. It has not come to us. I would rather, therefore, do what I can in defence of principles which I believe to be both right in themselves and enormous importance to the future of the human race, than stand aside and do nothing. It is *doing nothing* that is the worst expedient of all.

"When, therefore, my pacifist friends ask me whether I can imagine Jesus Christ dropping a bomb or firing a gun, I am entitled to reply: 'No, I cannot; but neither can I imagine him standing aside and doing nothing at all.'

"I am compelled to echo the words of a very dear relative of mine who, loathing war as much as any pacifist that ever breathed, said to me at the beginning of the last War (in which he lost his life): "If you can stop war with spiritual power, do it. If you cannot, let me do what I can; and if you are right in thinking that war is so damnable that anyone who takes part in it is damned, then I would rather be damned than let these things go on without doing all I can to stop them, even at the cost of my own life!

"Is it not very close to the meaning of our Lord when he said: 'He that loseth his life shall save it'?"

The foregoing is the concluding portion of a touchingly sorrowful article contributed to *The Survey Graphic* of December 1941 by the celebrated Dr. Maude Royden of the Guildhouse, London. She is one of the foremost pacifists of the West. Like many, she has felt compelled to revise her position and is now most reluctantly but fully ranged on the side of the defenders of the British Isles.

The article demands a considered reply. I have been in constant touch with the Western pacifists. In my opinion, Dr. Royden has surrendered her position in the portion I

have quoted. If individuals have lived up to the Christian teaching (*i.e.*, non-violence) and that on a small scale, one would think practice should make such a life possible for many people and on a large scale. It is undoubtedly wrong and foolish "to act as though one had the power which in fact one has not." "But", says the worthy writer, "such power does not come to those who have not disciplined themselves, at the last moment, in the hour of need."

I suggest that with the knowledge of the defect, no time should be lost in seeking to remove it. That by itself is doing not only something but the right thing. To deny one's faith by contrary practice is surely the worst thing one can do.

And, I am not sure that "doing nothing is the worst expedient of all." In septic treatment, for instance, doing nothing is not only expedient, it is obligatory.

There is no cause whatsoever for despondency, much less for denial of one's faith at the crucial moment. Why should not British pacifists stand aside and remodel their life in its entirety? They might be unable to bring about peace outright, but they would lay a solid foundation for it and give the surest test of their faith. When, in the face of an upheaval such as we are witnessing, there are only a few individuals of immovable faith, they have to live up to their faith even though they may produce no visible effect on the course of events. They should believe that their action will produce tangible results in due course. Their staunchness is bound to attract sceptics. I would also suggest that individuals like Dr. Maude Royden are not mere camp followers. They are leaders. Therefore, they have to live their lives in strict accord with the *Sermon on the Mount* and they will find immediately that there is much to give up and much to remodel. The greatest thing that they have to deny themselves is the fruit of imperialism. The present complicated life of the Londoner and his high living is possible only because of the hoards brought from Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. In spite of the

fierce criticism which has been levelled against my letter 'To Every Briton',\* I adhere to every word of it, and I am convinced that posterity will adopt the remedy suggested therein against violence, however organized and fierce. And now that the enemy is at the gates of India, I am advising my countrymen the same course of action I advised the British people. My advice may or may not be accepted by my countrymen. I would remain unmoved. Their non-acceptance will be no test of failure of non-violence. I would subscribe to the charge of my imperfection. But a *satyagrahi* does not wait for perfection before he invites others to experiment with him, provided always that his faith is immovable like a mountain. The advice that Dr. Royden's relative gave her, and which she quotes approvingly, is altogether wrong. If the war is damnable, how can he stop the things that go on by taking part in it, even though it may be on the defensive side and at the cost of his own life? For, the defence has to resort to all the damnable things that the enemy does, and that with greater vigour if it has to succeed. Such a giving of life is not only not saving it, but a mere waste.

I have attended the Doctor's services in her Church where a living belief in the efficacy of prayer is much in vogue. When the impenetrable gloom surrounded her, why did she not find strength and consolation and real action in heart-prayer? It is never too late to mend. She and her fellow-pacifists, many of whom I have the privilege of knowing, should take heart and, like Peter, repent of the momentary loss of faith and return to the old faith in non-violence with renewed vigour. Their return will mean no material loss to the war effort, but will mean a great deal to the anti-war effort which is bound to succeed, sooner rather than later, if man is to live as man and not become a two-footed brute.

—*Harijan*: March 15, 1942.

\* See page 118.

## A YOUNG CANADIAN'S QUESTION

*"For a non-violent State, bigness is wholly unnecessary for its protection against aggression. Such a State will need spend nothing for protection against aggression from without."*

FROM MY AMERICAN post, I pick up the following typical letter from Vancouver:

"I cannot truthfully say that I am an advocate of your 'India for the Indians' policy, but I have read your article in *Liberty Magazine* and followed newspaper accounts of your illustrious life. I say 'illustrious' not in the sense of the mighty heads of Europe, but of a man who is truly attempting to better his own people, not to perpetrate his personal fancies. I know, of course, that your principles constitute a return of India to village industry and more international economic co-operation and good-will towards men, but I should like to know just what stand your new democracy would take in world politics. The small countries of Europe thought that they would keep their finger out of the pie, as the saying goes, but look where they are now. I should like to know from the pen of the spiritual leader of India himself what the Government's attitude towards resident Britons would be and if British and other foreign trading firms would be allowed. Would the new Government of India follow the policies of Japan until Perry and the United States fleet entered the harbour of Yokohama in 1853. That is, would foreigners and foreign trade be excluded?

"I hope that you will pardon the intrusion of a young Canadian, who wishes to more fully understand the problems of your country."

Denuded of the courtesies, the writer's straight question

is: "Will there be room for Britishers and foreigners in free India?" The question should have nothing to do with my spirituality, supposed or real. It does not arise for free America or free Britain. And it will not arise when India becomes really free. For, India will then be free to do what she likes, without let or hindrance from anybody. But it is pleasing to speculate what India would do, if she becomes free, as she must sooner or later. If I have any influence over her policies, foreigners will be welcome, provided their presence is beneficial to the country. They will never be allowed to exploit and impoverish the country, as they have done hitherto.

What free India will otherwise look like, remains to be seen. She has nothing to fear from the contemplation of the helplessness of the small nations of Europe, if she continues to tread the non-violent course she has done with more or less perfection and with more or less success. For a non-violent State, bigness is wholly unnecessary for its protection against aggression. Such a State will need spend nothing for protection against aggression from without. Whether such a State will ever come into being is a fair question to ask. Reason suggests no flaw in the theoretical conception of it. Whether human nature will respond to what has been called an exactious call is another question. It has been known in individual cases to rise to unimaginable heights. There is nothing to prevent its multiplication by patient endeavour. Anyway, I am not going to lose my faith and abandon the attempt because I can show no visible sign of such a response from India. One might as well abandon all hope, as some have done, for the attainment of India's unadulterated freedom. For they say, it will take centuries for India, which is largely and wholly unarmed, to become a military nation. I refuse to be prey to such despair. In the ringing words of Lokamanya: "Freedom is India's birthright, and she will have it, cost what it may". Glory lies in the attempt to reach one's goal and not in reaching it. I passionately believe

in the possibility of attainment through the perfection of the non-violent technique, whose hidden resources no one has fathomed. We have only found a foot-hold. Perseverance opens up treasures which bring perennial joy. If the toil is great, so is the fruit thereof.

—*Harijan*: April 5, 1942.

## LXII

## NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

*"In actual practice, the expansion of my non-violence has kept exact pace with that of my identification with starved humanity. I am still far from the non-violence of my conception, for am I not still far away from the identification of my conception with dumb humanity?"*

JAPAN IS KNOCKING at our gates. What are we to do in a non-violent way? If we were a free country, things could be done non-violently to prevent the Japanese from entering the country. As it is, non-violent resistance could commence the moment they effected a landing. Thus non-violent resisters would refuse them any help, even water. For, it is no part of their duty to help anyone to steal their country. But if a Japanese had missed his way and was dying of thirst and sought help as a human being, a non-violent resister, who may not regard anyone as his enemy, would give water to the thirsty one. Suppose the Japanese compel resisters to give them water, the resisters must die in the act of resistance. It is conceivable that they will exterminate all resisters. The underlying belief in such non-violent resistance is that the aggressor will, in time, be mentally and even physically tired of killing non-violent resisters. He will begin to search what this new



(for him) force is which refuses co-operation without seeking to hurt, and will probably desist from further slaughter. But the resisters may find that the Japanese are utterly heartless and that they do not care how many they kill. The non-violent resisters will have won the day inasmuch as they will have preferred extermination to submission.

But things will not happen quite so simply as I have put them. There are at least four parties in the country. First the British and the army they have brought into being. The Japanese declare that they have no designs upon India. Their quarrel is only with the British. In this they are assisted by some Indians who are in Japan. It is difficult to guess how many, but there must be a fairly large number who believe in the declaration of the Japanese and think that they will deliver the country from the British yoke and retire. Even if the worst happens, their fatigue of the British yoke is so great that they would even welcome the Japanese yoke for a change. This is the second party. The third are the neutrals, who though not non-violent will help neither the British nor the Japanese.

The fourth and last are non-violent resisters. If they are only a few, their resistance will be ineffective except as an example for the future. Such resisters will calmly die, wherever they are, but will not bend the knee before the aggressor. They will not be deceived by promises. They do not seek deliverance from the British yoke through the help of a third party. They believe implicitly in their own way of fighting and no other. Their fight is on behalf of the dumb millions who do not perhaps know that there is such a thing as deliverance. They have neither hatred for the British nor love for the Japanese. They wish well to both as to all others. They would like both to do what is right. They believe that non-violence alone will lead men to do right under all circumstances. Therefore, if for want of enough companions non-violent resisters cannot reach the goal, they will not give up their way but pursue it to death.

The task before the votaries of non-violence is very difficult. But no difficulty can baffle men who have faith in their mission.

One thing has to be made clear. Where the British army is actually engaging the 'enemy', it would be perhaps improper for direct resistance to function. It will not be non-violent resistance when it is mixed with, or allies itself to, violence.

Let me, therefore, reiterate what I have said so often. The best preparation for, and even the expression of, non-violence lies in the determined pursuit of the constructive programme. Anyone who believes that without the backing of the constructive programme he will show non-violent strength when the testing time comes will fail miserably. It will be, like the attempt of a starving unarmed man to match his physical strength against a fully fed and panoplied soldier, foredoomed to failure. He who has no belief in the constructive programme has, in my opinion, no concrete feeling for the starved millions. He who is devoid of that feeling cannot fight non-violently. In actual practice, the expansion of my non-violence has kept exact pace with that of my identification with starved humanity. I am still far from the non-violence of my conception, for am I not still far away from the identification of my conception with dumb humanity?

—*Harijan*: April 12, 1942.

### LXIII

#### WITH A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

*"Nations fighting with non-violence are unconquerable, for their strength does not depend on the number of rifles and machine-guns they possess."*

*Miss Curie:*\* Axis Powers's triumph would bring India to a fate comparable to that inflicted on Poland and France. That is why the average citizen of conquered countries puts his belief and hope in Allied victory.

*Gandhiji:* India can win laurels only through non-violence. What we have achieved during the last twenty years shows what immense results could be obtained if the principle of non-violence was generally practised by our people.

*Miss Curie:* But Indians will have a tougher time opposing by non-violence German and Japanese divisions than undermining British rule.

*Gandhiji:* Quite possible. But this is the hour to live up to our faith. If the Japanese invaded India, I would not encourage our people to fight with arms. Neither would I suffer them to make a pact with the aggressors. Our struggle will be hard, but it will bring out the best in us.

*Miss Curie:* So you accept the idea of India refusing to fight or even to be defended by others?

*Gandhiji:* It is physically impossible to transform India suddenly into an armed nation. To give our people weapons and to teach them non-violence are two different methods of making them strong. Both take time. I simply believe that my method is surer, more precise, and in the long run more successful. In order to beat the Japanese and German armies by force, you must become stronger than they are, and, therefore, worse and more ruthless. Then, what have you won? Nothing. On the contrary, nations fighting with non-violence are unconquerable, for their strength does not depend on the number of rifles and machine-guns they possess. And when the method is good, there is no need to worry about immediate results. Success is bound to come in the end. In a non-

\* Miss Eve Curie, the daughter and biographer of her distinguished mother Madame Curie, saw Gandhiji as a Press correspondent representing *New York Herald, Tribune* and allied newspapers in London.

violent struggle, there are two alternatives: either the enemy comes to terms with you, then you win without blood; or the enemy annihilates you. This last solution is not worse than what a violent war in any case brings about. I don't blame you for wanting to liberate France just as I want to see India free; but it is a sign of too great impatience to think that any country can really be liberated by use of arms.

—*Harijan*: April 19, 1942.

LXIV

PLEA FOR BRITISH WITHDRAWAL

*"I have said more than once that the Nazi Power had arisen as a nemesis to punish Britain for her sins of exploitation and enslavement of the Asiatic and African races."*

IF THE BRITISH left India to her fate as they had to leave Singapore, non-violent India would not lose anything. Probably the Japanese would leave India alone. Perhaps India, if the main parties composed their differences as they probably would, would be able effectively to help China in the way of peace and, in the long run, may even play a decisive part in the promotion of world peace. But all these happy things may not happen, if the British will leave India only when they must. How much more creditable, how much braver it would be for Britain to offer battle in the West and leave the East to adjust her own position. There is no guarantee that she will be able to protect, during this War, all her vast possessions. They have become a dead weight round her. If she wisely loosens herself from this weight, and the Nazis, the Fascists or the Japanese, instead of leaving India alone, choose to subjugate her,

they will find that they have to hold more than they can in their iron hoop. They will find much more difficult than Britain has. Their very rigidity will strangle them. The British system had an elasticity, which served so long as it had no powerful rivals. British elasticity is of no help to-day. I have said more than once that the Nazi Power had risen as a nemesis to punish Britain for her sins of exploitation and enslavement of the Asiatic and African races. Whatever the consequences, therefore, to India, her real safety and Britain's too, lie in orderly and timely British withdrawal from India.

—*Harijan*: April 26, 1942.

#### LXV

#### ONE THING NEEDFUL

*"I am convinced that the time has come during the War, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world."*

"To those of us who have loved India and Indians and have tried to serve her people faithfully, the fact that in our hour of distress the hatred against us is growing is a matter of infinite sorrow. I admit we have not played and are still not playing fair by India; but can two wrongs make a right? When even the 'enemy' is in dire distress, should he not be given some quarter? In asking us to withdraw, are you not inviting your own people to bend the knee to Japan, knowing full well that you have not the non-violent strength as a country to resist any foreign aggression or domination? If you had had it, we could never have kept our hold



on you. Will you not forgive past sins and rely on the goodwill of the new generation of Englishmen and women who can no longer think in terms of Empire? Barring you, among the Congress leaders, is there anyone who believes whole-heartedly in non-violence? Yours is the only logical position, and you alone are a real friend of Britain”.

This is an epitome of a pathetic English letter. I can but repeat what I felt and said in my letter to Lord Linlithgow, recording my impressions of the first interview with him after the declaration of War. I have nothing to withdraw, nothing to repent of. I remain the same friend to-day of the British that I was then. I have not a trace of hatred in me towards them. But I have never been blind to their limitations, as I have not been to their great virtues.

I do not deny the existence of hatred among the people at large, nor its increase with the march of events. But I claim that my national prescription has kept it under subjection and even sterilized it to an extent.

I am convinced, therefore, that the time has come during the War, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world. I see with the naked eye that the estrangement is growing. Every act of the British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest and for its own safety. There is no such thing as joint common interest. To take the extreme case, a British victory over the Japanese will not mean a victory for India. But that is not a near event. Meanwhile, the introduction of foreign soldiers, the admitted inequalities of treatment of Indian and European evacuees, and the manifestly overbearing behaviour of the troops are adding to the distrust of British intentions and declarations. I feel that they cannot all of a sudden change their traditional nature. Racial superiority is treated not as a vice but a virtue. This is true not only in India, it is equally true in Africa; it is true

in Burma and Ceylon. These countries could not be held otherwise than by assertion of race superiority.

This is a drastic disease requiring a drastic remedy. I have pointed the remedy — complete and immediate orderly withdrawal of the British from India at least, in reality and properly from all non-European possessions. It will be the bravest and the cleanest act of the British people. It will at once put the Allied cause on a completely moral basis, and may even lead to a most honourable peace between the warring nations. And the clean end of Imperialism is likely to be the end of Fascism and Nazism. The suggested action will certainly blunt the edge of Fascism and Nazism, which are an off-shoot of Imperialism.

British distress cannot be relieved by nationalist India's aid in the manner suggested by the writer. It is ill-equipped for the purpose, even if it can be made enthusiastic about it. And what is there to enthuse nationalistic India? Just as a person cannot feel the glow of the sun's heat in its absence, even so India cannot feel the glow of freedom without the actual experience of it. Many of us simply cannot contemplate an utterly free India with calmness and equanimity. The first experience is likely to be a shock before the glow comes. That shock is a necessity. India is a mighty nation. No one can tell how she will act and with what effect when the shock is delivered.

I feel, therefore, that I must devote the whole of my energy to the realization of the supreme act. The writer of the letter admits the wrong done to India by the British. I suggest to the writer that the first condition of British success is the present undoing of the wrong. It should precede, not follow, victory. The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait. Assume, however, that it does not; free India will be better able to cope with the invasion. Unadulterated non-co-operation will then have full sway.

—*Harijan*: May 10, 1942.

## "QUIT INDIA"

*"We don't want to drive away the British people from here. It is the British rulers whom we are asking quietly to withdraw. It is the British domination that we want to banish from our land. We have no quarrel with the Englishmen."*

## I ASK EVERY BRITON

I ASK EVERY BRITON to support me in my appeal to the British at this very hour to retire from every Asiatic and African possession, and at least from India. That step is essential for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism and Fascism. In this, I include Japan's 'ism' also. It is a good copy of the two. Acceptance of my appeal will confound all the military plans of all the Axis Powers, and even of the military advisers of Great Britain.

If my appeal goes home, I am sure the cost of British interests in India and Africa would be nothing compared to the present evergrowing cost of the War to Britain. And when one puts morals in the scales, there is nothing but gain to Britain, India and the world.

My people may or may not approve of this loud thinking. I have consulted nobody. This appeal is being written during my silence day. I am just now concerned with Britain's action. When slavery was abolished in America many slaves protested, some even wept. But protests and tears notwithstanding, slavery was abolished in law. But the abolition was the result of a bloody war between the South and the North; and so though the Negro's lot is considerably better than before, he still remains the outcast of high society. I am asking for something much higher. I ask for a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and



for a new era, even though there may be protests and wailings from some of us.

—*Harijan*: May 17, 1942.

#### NO QUARREL WITH BRITISH PEOPLE

India has no quarrel with the British people. I have hundreds of British friends. Andrew's friendship was enough to tie me to the British people. But both he and I were fixed in our determination that British rule in India in any shape or form must end. Hitherto, the rulers have said: 'We would gladly retire if we know to whom we should have to hand over the reins'. My answer now is: 'Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy'. I invite every Britisher who loves Britain, India and the world to join me in the appeal to the British Power, and, if it is rejected, to adopt such non-violent measures as would compel the Power to comply with the appeal.

—*Harijan*: May 24, 1942.

#### LEAVE INDIA IN GOD'S HANDS

It has cost me much to come to the conclusion that the British should withdraw from India, and it is costing me still more to work out that conclusion. It is like asking loved ones to part, but it has become a paramount duty. And the beauty and the necessity for withdrawal lie in its being immediate. They and we are both in the midst of fire. If they go, there is a likelihood of both of us being safe. If they do not, Heaven only knows what will happen. I have said in the plainest terms that in my proposal there is no question of entrusting the administration to any person or party. That would be a necessary consideration, if the withdrawal was part of a settlement. Under my proposal, they have to leave India in God's hands — but in modern parlance to anarchy, and that anarchy may lead to

internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities. From these, a true India will arise in the place of the false one we see.

—*Harijan*: May 24, 1942.

#### MY MORAL SUPPORT

I used to say that my moral support was entirely with Britain. I am very sorry to have to confess that to-day my mind refuses to give that moral support. British behaviour towards India has filled me with great pain. I was not quite prepared for Mr. Amery's performances or Sir Stafford Cripps' Mission. These have, in my estimation, put Britain morally in the wrong. And, therefore, though I do not wish any humiliation to Britain and, therefore, no defeat — my mind refuses to give her any moral support.

*Harijan*: May 24, 1942.

#### AMERICA'S PARTICIPATION IN WAR

I expressed my opinion some time ago that it was a wrong thing for America and unfortunate for the world peace that America, instead of working—as she could have worked—for world peace, identified herself with War. I am sure she would have, if she had intended, brought about peace. But it is my firm opinion that she did not use her opportunity. I know that I have no right to criticize such a big nation. I do not know all the facts that determined America to throw herself into the cauldron. But somehow or other, opinion has forced itself upon me that America could have remained out, and even now she can do so if she divests herself of the intoxication that her immense wealth has produced. And I would like to repeat what I have said about the withdrawal of British Power from India. Both America and Britain lack the moral basis for engaging in this War, unless they put their own houses in order,

while making a fixed determination to withdraw their influence and power both from Africa and Asia, and remove the colour-bar. They have no right to talk about protecting democracies and protecting civilization and human freedom until the canker of white superiority is destroyed in its entirety.

—*Harijan*: May 24, 1942.

#### MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR

With the overwhelming sense of the truths, as it appears to me, I am taking every care humanly possible to prepare the ground. I know that the novelty of the idea and that, too, at this juncture, has caused a shock to many people. But I could not help myself. Even at the risk of being called mad, I had to tell the truth if I was to be true to myself. I regard it as my solid contribution to the War and to India's deliverance from the peril that is and the peril that is threatening. It is, too, my real contribution to communal unity. No one can visualize what it will be like. Only it will not be the sham we have had up to now. It has touched only the few politically-minded people. The masses have remained unaffected by it.

Whilst, therefore, I will take every imaginable care consistent with the urgency, I cannot guarantee freedom from cowardice before taking any forward step. The cowardice will probably not be shed without much travail. Nor is waiting possible, till hatred abates. Withdrawal of the hated Power is the only way to rid the land of the debasing hatred. The cause gone, hatred must cease.

—*Harijan*: May 31, 1942.

#### NO PRICE TOO HEAVY

Of course the people must not, on any account, lean on the Japanese to get rid of the British Power. That were a remedy worse than the disease. But as I have already said,

in this struggle every risk has to be run in order to cure ourselves of the biggest disease—a disease which has sapped our manhood and almost made us feel as if we must for ever be slaves. It is an insufferable thing. The cost of the cure, I know, will be heavy. No price is too heavy to pay for the deliverance.

—*Harijan*: May 31, 1942.

#### FUTILITY OF HATRED

I am showing the futility of hatred. I am showing that hatred injures the hater, never the hated. An Imperial Power cannot act otherwise than it has been doing. If we are strong, the British become powerless. I am, therefore, trying to wean the people from their hatred by asking them to develop the strength of mind to invite the British to withdraw and at the same time to resist the Japanese. With the British withdrawal, the incentive to welcome the Japanese goes and the strength felt in securing British withdrawal will be used for stemming the Japanese inroad . . .

Experience teaches us that hearty co-ordination and co-operation is impossible where mutual trust and respect are wanting. British presence invites the Japanese, it promotes communal disunion and other discords, and what is perhaps the worst of all, deepens the hatred born of impotence. Orderly British withdrawal will turn the hatred into affection and will automatically remove communal distemper. So far as I can see, the two communities are unable to think or see things in their proper perspective so long as they are under the influence of the third Power.

—*Harijan*: May 31, 1942.

#### FREE INDIA CAN HELP BEST

I remain the passionate friend of China that I have always claimed to be. I know what loss of freedom means.

Therefore, I could not but be in sympathy with China which is my next-door neighbour in distress. And, if I believed in violence and if I could influence India, I would put in motion every force at my command on behalf of China to save her liberty. In making, therefore, the suggestion which I have made about withdrawal of British Power, I have not lost sight of China. But because I have China in mind, I feel that the only effective way for India to help China is to persuade Great Britain to free India and let a Free India make her full contribution to the war effort. Instead of being sullen and discontented, India free, will be a mighty force for the good of mankind in general.

It is true that the solution I have presented is a heroic solution beyond the ken of Englishmen. But being a true friend of Britain and China and Russia, I must not suppress the solution which I believe to be eminently practical and probably the only one in order to save the situation and in order to convert the War into a power for good, instead of being what it is—a peril to humanity.

—*Harijan*: June 7, 1942.

#### THE POISON THAT CORRUPTS

We don't want to drive away the British people from here. It is the British rulers whom we are asking quietly to withdraw. It is the British domination that we want to banish from our land. We have no quarrel with the Englishmen, many of whom are my friends, but we want the rule to end altogether, for that is the poison that corrupts all it touches, that is the obstacle that stops all progress.

—*Harijan*: June 7, 1942.

#### LANGUAGE — A POOR VEHICLE

I know that what I am saying to-day is not easy to understand. Language is but a poor vehicle of one's

thoughts. What I have said is bound to suffer from the limitations of that vehicle. But I want you to ponder coolly over what I have been saying and writing and perhaps you will be able to understand me. I am also sure that those who cannot, or will not understand me, will do so in the light of experience, *i.e.*, if they survive the present catastrophe.

—*Harijan*: June 7, 1942.

#### TWO FORCES

Two forces of the same type are ranged against each other in the present War. We do not know what will be the upshot. At the present moment, the upshot is mutual destruction of life and property, and destruction not alone of the combatants but of innocent non-combatants. I do not want for our country this power of destruction that we find is having full play. I do not want the power of a Hitler, I want the power of a free peasant.

—*Harijan*: June 7, 1942.

#### CANNOT AFFORD TO WAIT

I waited and waited until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait, I might have to wait till doomsday. For, the preparation that I have prayed for and worked for may never come, and, in the meantime, I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that, even at certain risks which are obviously involved, I must ask the people to resist the slavery. But even that readiness, let me assure you, depends on the non-violent man's unflinching faith. All I am conscious of is that there is not a trace of violence in the remotest corner of my being, and my conscious pursuit of

*ahimsa* for the last 50 years cannot possibly fail me at this crisis. The people have not my *ahimsa*, but mine should help them.

—*Harijan*: June 14, 1942.

#### ORDERED ANARCHY

There is ordered anarchy around and about us. I am sure that the anarchy that may result because of the British withdrawal, or their refusal to listen to us and our decision to defy their authority, will in no way be worse than the present anarchy. After all, those who are unarmed cannot produce a frightful amount of violence or anarchy, and I have a faith that out of that anarchy may arise pure non-violence. But to be passive witness of the terrible violence that is going on, of the terrible anarchy that is going on in the name of resisting impossible foreign aggression, is a thing I cannot stand. It is a thing that would make me ashamed of my *ahimsa*. It is made of sterner stuff.

—*Harijan*: June 14, 1942.

#### AN UNWARRANTED CLAIM

It is an unwarranted claim Britain and America are making—the claim of saving democracy and freedom. It is a wrong thing to make that claim when there is this terrible tragedy of holding a whole nation in bondage... The Allies have no right to call their cause to be morally superior to the Nazi cause, so long as they hold in custody the fairest part and one of the most ancient nations of the earth.

—*Harijan*: June 14, 1942.

#### APPEAL BASED ON INHERENT JUSTICE

I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have has been discounted by the British as

non-violence of the weak. And so, all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice, that it might find an echo in the British heart. It is made from a moral plane, and even as they do not hesitate to act desperately in the physical field and take grave risks, let them for once act desperately on the moral field and declare that India is independent to-day, irrespective of India's demand.

—*Harijan*: June 14, 1942.

#### LEAVE INDIA ALONE

India is being ground down to dust and humiliated, even before the Japanese advent, not for India's defence—and no one knows for whose defence. And so, one fine morning, I came to the decision to make this honest demand: 'For Heaven's sake, leave India alone. Let us breathe the air of freedom. It may choke us, suffocate us, as it did the slaves on their emancipation. But I want the present sham to end.

—*Harijan*: June 14, 1942.

#### NO HEART IN THE WAR

India has no heart in the War. In fact, she has her eyes on Japan. You may to-day be denuding her of her resources, but they are the resources of an unwilling India. India is, thus, a corpse—a heavy carcass—of which the weight might make your victory impossible. If by some chance England comes to her senses—the Allies come to their senses—and say: 'Let us get rid of this carcass', that single act will give them a power which no military skill or resources and no amount of American help can give them.

—*Harijan*: June 21, 1942.

#### BURDEN OF A HUGE CORPSE

I say that the British Power in India should go to-day for the world peace, for China, for Russia and for the



Allied cause.... Complete independence frees India's energies, frees her to make her contribution to the world crisis. To-day the Allies are carrying the burden of a huge corpse, a huge nation lying prostrate at the feet of Britain, I would even say at the feet of the Allies. For, America is the predominant partner, financing the War, giving her mechanical ability and her resources which are inexhaustible. America is thus a partner in the guilt.

—*Harijan*: June 21, 1942.

#### NON-EMBARRASSMENT POLICY

It would be wrong to reject my proposal and say India should remain a slave in order that Britain may win or be able to defend China. I cannot accept that degrading position. India, free and independent, will play a prominent part in defending China. To-day I do not think she is rendering any real help to China. We have followed the non-embarrassment policy so far. We will follow it even now. But we cannot allow the British Government to exploit it in order to strengthen the strangle-hold on India. And to-day it amounts to that.

—*Harijan*: June 21, 1942.

#### BRITAIN SHOULD BE ASHAMED

India lying at the feet of Great Britain may mean China lying at the feet of Japan. I cannot help using this language. I feel it. You may think it startling and big. But why should it be startling? Think of the 400 million people hungering for freedom. They want to be left alone. They are not savages. They have an ancient culture, ancient civilization, such variety and richness of languages. Britain should be ashamed of holding these people as slaves. You may say: 'You deserve it'. If you do, I will simply say it is not right for any nation to hold another in

bondage. I say even if a nation should want to be in bondage, it should be derogatory to one's dignity to keep it in bondage.

—*Harijan*: June 21, 1942.

#### THE FRIENDLIEST THING

The appeal has been made in no offensive mood. It is the friendliest thing that I could do. It is conceived in the interest of the Allied cause. I have made it in a purely non-violent spirit and as a non-violent step. But this is merely personal to me. It is necessary to remember in considering my proposal that it is essentially a non-violent gesture. Such non-violence, as India has or may have, becomes important without the withdrawal of the British Power—even as that part of India which will put up an armed fight becomes impotent. The step that I have conceived overcomes all difficulties, shuts all controversy about violence and non-violence and immediately frees India to offer her best help to the Allied cause, and more especially to China which is in imminent danger. I am convinced that the independence of India, which the withdrawal of the British Power involves, would ensure China's freedom and put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis.

—*Harijan*: June 28, 1942.

#### BRITAIN DOES NOT DESERVE TO WIN

Britain does not deserve to win the War on the ground of justice, if she is fighting to keep her Asiatic and African possessions. I am not unaware of the tremendous change in Britain's economic policy that the acceptance of my proposal involves. But that change is a vital necessity, if this War is to have a satisfactory ending.

Who knows if Britain's acceptance of my proposal will

not by itself mean an honourable end of the War, resulting in a change even in the mentality of the Axis Powers?

—*Harijan*: June 28, 1942.

LXVII

TO EVERY JAPANESE

*"I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction, and deflect you from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots."*

I MUST CONFESS at the outset that though I have no ill-will against you, I intensely dislike your attack upon China. From your lofty height you have descended to imperial ambition. You will fail to realize that ambition and may become the authors of the dimemberment of Asia, thus unwittingly preventing World Federation and Brotherhood, without which there can be no hope for humanity.

Even since I was a lad of eighteen, studying in London over fifty years ago, I learnt, through the writings of the late Sir Edwin Arnold, to prize the many excellent qualities of your nation. I was thrilled when in South Africa I learnt of your brilliant victory over Russian arms. After my return to India from South Africa in 1915, I came in close touch with Japanese monks who lived as members of our *Ashram* from time to time. One of them became a valuable member of the *Ashram* in Sevagram, and his application to duty, his dignified bearing, his unfailing devotion to daily worship, affability, unruffledness under varying circumstances, and his natural smile, which was positive evidence of his inner peace, had endeared him to all of us. And now that, owing to your declaration of war

against Great Britain, he has been taken away from us, we miss him as a dear co-worker. He has left behind as a memory his daily prayer and his little drum, to the accompaniment of which we open our morning and evening prayers.

In the background of these pleasant recollections, I grieve deeply as I contemplate what appears to me to be your unprovoked attack against China and, if reports are to be believed, your merciless devastation of that great and ancient land.

It was a worthy ambition of yours to take equal rank with the Great Powers of the world. Your aggression against China and your alliance with the Axis Powers was surely an unwarranted excess of that ambition.

I should have thought that you would be proud of the fact that that great and ancient people, whose old classical literature you have adopted as your own, are your neighbours. Your understanding of one another's history, tradition, literature should bind you as friends rather than make you the enemies you are to-day.

If I was a free man, and if you allowed me to come to your country, frail though I am, I would not mind risking my health, may be my life, to come to your country to plead with you to desist from the wrong you are doing to China and the world and, therefore, to yourself.

But I enjoy no such freedom. And we are in the unique position of having to resist an Imperialism that we detest no less than yours and Nazism. Our resistance to it does not mean harm to the British people. We seek to convert them. Ours is an unarmed revolt against British rule. An important party in the country is engaged in a deadly but friendly quarrel with the foreign rulers.

But in this they need no aid from Foreign Powers. You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity, we

should have done it as soon as the War broke out nearly three years ago.

Our movement demanding the withdrawal of the British Power from India should in no way be misunderstood. In fact, if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the Independence of India, a recognition of that Independence by Britain, should leave you no excuse for any attack on India. Moreover, the reported profession sorts ill with your ruthless aggression against China.

I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India, by making her free for resisting all militarist and imperialist ambition, whether it is called British Imperialism, German Nazism, or your pattern. If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarism of the world inspite of our belief that in non-violence we have the only solvent of the militarist spirit and ambition. Personally, I fear that without declaring the Independence of India, the Allied Powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion. The Allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare. If they copy it, their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom must come to naught. I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognizing *now* the freedom of India, and turning sullen India's forced co-operation into freed India's voluntary co-operation.

To Britain and the Allies, we have appealed in the name of justice in proof of their professions, and in their own self-interest. To you, I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the Allies, some other Power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win, you

will leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds, however skilfully achieved.

Even if you win, it will not prove that you were in the right, it will only prove that your power of destruction was greater. This applies obviously to the Allies, too, unless they perform *now* the just and righteous act of freeing India as an earnest and promise of similarly freeing all other subject peoples in Asia and Africa.

Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of Free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the Allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any such idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction, and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart. Anyway, I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature. On the strength of that faith I have conceived the impending movement in India, and it is that faith which has prompted this appeal to you.

I am,

Your friend and well-wisher,

M. K. Gandhi

—*Harijan*: July 26, 1942.

*Sevagram*: July 18, 1942.

LXVIII  
WORLD FEDERATION

*"The very first step to a World Federation is to recognize the freedom of conquered and exploited nations. Thus, India, Africa have to be freed."*

Q. Instead of striving for India's freedom, why would you not strive for a far greater and nobler end—World Federation? Surely, that will automatically include India's freedom as the greater includes the less.

A. There is an obvious fallacy in this question. Federation is undoubtedly a greater and nobler end for free nations. It is a greater and nobler end for them to strive to promote Federation than be self-centred, seeking only to preserve their own freedom. They are finding it difficult, if not impossible, for individuals to retain freedom without a combination. It has become a necessity while the War lasts, and it would be good if they voluntarily pledge themselves now to remain united even after the War. Defeat of any one member should make no difference. The survivors will not rest content till the defeated member is avenged. Still, this won't be a World Federation. It would be a mere defensive alliance between a certain combination. The very first step to a World Federation is to recognize the freedom of conquered and exploited nations. Thus, India, Africa have to be freed. The second step would be to announce to and assure the aggressor Powers, in the present instance, the Axis Powers, that immediately the War ends, they will be recognized as members of the World Federation in the same sense as the Allies. This presupposes an agreement among the members of the World Federation as to the irreducible fundamentals. If this is not forthcoming, the Federation will fall to pieces under the slightest strain. Therefore, it has to come about voluntarily. I suggest that non-violence

is the basis of voluntariness. It is because of all the nations of the world India is the one nation which has a message, however limited and crude it may be, in that direction that it must have immediate freedom to enable it to play its part. You may not quote against me Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I know that they do not hold the view I hold on non-violence. When India gets her freedom, the probability is that I shall no longer be wanted by any party and everybody would be war-mad. Nevertheless, there will be, I am quite sure, a respectable number of votaries of non-violence who will make their contribution. I hope you will agree with me, that India, in seeking first to be free, is not retarding Federation. It wants her freedom for the sake of the nations in distress, especially China and Russia, and for the whole of humanity—in your language, World Federation. You will also, I hope, see that no universal Federation is possible without India becoming free now. It would be an earnest, too, of the Allied declarations.

—*Harijan*: Aug. 9, 1942.

## LXIX

## TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

*"You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot, therefore, disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to the Allied cause, if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time."*

AS I AM SUPPOSED to be the spirit behind the much discussed and equally well abused Resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on Independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my posi-



tion. For, I am not unknown to you. I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West—not even excepting Great Britain. British friends knowing me personally are more discerning than the American. I suffer from the well-known malady called hero-worship. Good Dr. Holmes, until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally, became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me I never knew myself. So I receive often embarrassing letters from America, expecting me to perform miracles. Dr. Holmes was followed much later by the late Bishop Fisher, who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America, but fate had ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people.

Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me, through his essay on the *Duty of Civil Disobedience*, scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* transformed me over-night from a lawyer and city dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station; and Russia gave me in Tolstoy, a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. He blessed my movement in South Africa, when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the down-trodden people of the earth. So, you will see that I have not approached the present in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of *Unto This Last*, I could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal, or as it

has been popularly called 'Quit India', with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants.

I claim to be a votary of Truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim 'Truth is God' instead of the usual one 'God is Truth'. That maxim enables me to see God face to face, as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this Truth as witness between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked the country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the contrary, if I had not seen at once that for the sake of Great Britain and the Allied cause, it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage. Without this essential act of tardy justice, Britain could not justify her position before the un murmuring World Conscience, which is there nevertheless. Singapore, Malaya and Burma taught me that the disaster must not be repeated in India. I make bold to say that it cannot be averted, unless Britain trusts the people of India to use their liberty in favour of the Allied cause. By that supreme act of justice, Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill-will into active goodwill. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonder-working engineers and financial resources can produce.

I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted versions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction against the formidable but false propaganda that has poisoned American ears.

You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot, therefore, disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to the Allied cause, if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's Independence? It is being said: 'But this is not the time.' We say: 'This is the psychological moment for that recognition. For, then and then only can there be irresistible opposition to Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the Allied cause, if it is also of equal value to India. The Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's Independence as a war measure of first class magnitude.

*I am,  
Your friend,*

On way to Bombay: August 3, 1942. M. K. Gandhi.  
—*Harijan*: Aug. 9, 1942.

## LXX

### A LETTER TO MARSHAL CHIANG-KAI-SHEK

*"I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will co-operate together in friendship and brotherhood for their good and for the good of Asia and the world."*

I can never forget the five hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problem still nearer to me.

Long ago, between 1905 and 1913, when I was in South

Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew them first as clients and then as comrades in the Indian Passive Resistance Struggle in South Africa. I came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later, in India, I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.

I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend, Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled, if at all, by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

Because of this feeling I have towards China, and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come close to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British Power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle.

India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom.

That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace. That domination must, therefore, be prevented and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

I feel India cannot do so while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent by all means at our disposal a repetition of what befell these unfortunate

countries. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government and the recent failure of the Cripps Mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British Power, so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

I have told you of my faith in non-violence and of my belief in the effectiveness of this method if the whole nation would turn to it. The faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realize that India to-day as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the Government in free India would be formed from the various elements composing the nation.

Yet our people know for certain that India free can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many like me feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British Power to end immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

Unless we make that effort, there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan, growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out our own salvation.

To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree, and I am sure the Government of Free India would agree,

that the Allied Powers might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use the country as a base for operations against the threatened Japanese attack.

I need hardly give you my assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China, or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved, and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say any movement against the British Government, with which I may be connected, will be essentially non-violent. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority.

Very soon you will have completed five years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and in admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they must bear fruit.

To you, to Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes for your success. I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will co-operate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi.

Aug. 1942.

SPEECH AT THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS  
COMMITTEE - I

*"We shall get our freedom by fighting. It cannot fall from the skies. I know fully well that Britishers will have to give us freedom when we have made sufficient sacrifices and proved our worth. We must remove hatred for the British from our hearts."*

BEFORE YOU DISCUSS the Resolution\*, let me place before you one or two things. I want you to understand two things very clearly and to consider them from the same point of view from which I am placing them before you. I ask you to consider it from my point of view because if you approve of it, you will be enjoined to carry out all I say. It will be a great responsibility. There are people who ask me whether I am the same man that I was in 1920 or whether there has been any change in me. You are right in asking that question. I may tell you that I am the same man to-day that I was in 1920. The only difference is that I am much stronger in certain things now than what I was in 1920. I may explain it by pointing out that a man goes about heavily clothed in winter. But the same man may be found without much clothing in summer. This outward change does not make any difference in the man. There are people who may say that I say one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow. But I must tell you that there is no change in me. I stick to the principle of non-violence as I did before. If you are tired of it, then you need not come with me. It is not necessary or incumbent upon you to pass this Resolution. If you want *Swaraj* and independence, and if you feel that what I place before you is a good thing and right thing, then only accept it. It is

\* The Congress Working Committee's Resolution on British withdrawal (July 14, 1942.)

only that way you can give me complete support. If you do not do that, I am afraid you will have to rue what you do.

There is not much harm if a man does a wrong thing and repents, but in the present case you will be putting the country also in danger. If you do not believe fully in what I say, then I will request you not to accept it but to leave it. But if you accept it and do not understand me properly, then there is bound to be friction between us, although it may be of a friendly nature.

Another point I want to impress upon you is your great responsibility. Members of the A.I.C.C. are like members of a Parliament. The Congress represents the whole of India. The Congress, from its very inception, has not been of any particular group or any particular colour or caste or of any particular province. It has claimed, ever since its birth, to represent the whole nation, and on your behalf I have made the claim that you represent not only the registered members of the Congress but the entire nation.

I will again remind you that you should accept the Resolution only if you approve of it from your heart, because if you do not do that, you will expose both you and me to danger. That is the warning I want to give you. I did not, in the past, have before me the material I have ready to-day. God has given me an opportunity and if I do not have it, I will be a fool. Not only will I lose myself but I will be throwing away that great jewel of non-violence that God has placed in my hands.

I would not take up much of your time because if you accept the Resolution then I will have to address you again, but even then I would not take more than an hour of your time. What I want you to understand clearly is the way you have to tread and the man with whom you have to travel.

There are people who say that I am meant for destruction and that I do not know how to construct a thing. The reason is that I do not get an opportunity to construct. If



I were given an opportunity I would certainly welcome it, and I hope to show what can be done. I am accused of demolishing things. If you understand it properly, when freedom comes we can and will reconstruct what has been demolished. You must have from the beginning that confidence in yourself. Your work would not finish with the attainment of freedom. You will continue to be lascars, of course, in a non-violent way. Militarists, as soon as they get power, become dictators. There is no place for such dictators in our scheme of things. Our object is to achieve independence and whoever can take up the reins may do so.

There are people who have hatred in their heart for the British. I have heard people saying that they are disgusted with them. The mind of the common people does not differentiate between the Britishers and the imperialistic form of their government. To them both are the same. There are people who do not mind the advent of the Japanese. To them, perhaps, it would mean a change of masters. But it is a dangerous thing. You must remove it from your mind. This is a crucial hour. If we keep quiet and don't play our part, it would not be right on our part. If it is only Britain and the United States who fight this War, and if our part is only to give monetary help, whether given willingly or taken from us unwillingly, it is not a very happy proposition. But we can show our real grit and valour only when it becomes our own fight. Then even a child will be brave.

We shall get our freedom by fighting. It cannot fall from the skies. I know fully well that Britishers will have to give us freedom when we have made sufficient sacrifices and proved our strength. We must remove hatred for the British from our hearts. At least, in my heart there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact, I am a greater friend of the British now than I ever was. The reason for this is that at this moment they are in distress. My friendship demands that I must make them aware of their mistakes, as I am not in the position in which they are. They are

on the brink of a ditch and are about to fall into it. Therefore, even if they want to cut off my hands, my friendship demands that I should try to pull them out of that ditch.

This is my claim at which many people may laugh, but all the same I say that this is true. At a time when I am about to launch the biggest fight in my life, there can be no hatred for the British in my heart. The thought, that because they are in difficulties I should give them a push, is totally absent from my mind. It has never been there. It may be that in a moment of anger they might do things which might provoke you. Nevertheless, you should not resort to violence and put non-violence to shame. When such a thing happens you may take it that you will not find me alive, wherever I may be. Their blood will be on your head. If you don't understand this, it would be better if you reject this Resolution. It will redound to your credit.

How can I blame you for things which you may not be able to grasp? There is one principle in the fight which you must adopt. Never believe—as I have never believed—that the British are going to fail. I don't consider them to be a nation of cowards. I know that before they accept defeat, every soul in Britain will be sacrificed. They may be defeated, and they may leave you just as they left the people of Burma, Malaya and other places, with the idea of recapturing lost ground when they can. That may be their military strategy, but supposing they leave us, what happens to us? In that case, Japan will come here. The coming in of Japan will mean the end of China, and perhaps of Russia, too. In these matters Pandit Nehru is my *guru*. I don't want to be the instrument of Russia's defeat, nor of China's. If that happens I would hate myself.

When I raised the slogan 'Quit India', people in India, who were then feeling despondent, felt that I had placed before them a new thing. If you want real freedom you will have to come together, and such coming together will create a true democracy — a democracy the like of which has not been so far witnessed, nor have there been any

attempts made for such a type of true democracy. I have read a good deal about the French Revolution. Carlyle's works I read while in jail. I have great admiration for the French people. Pandit Jawaharlal has told me all about the Russian Revolution. But I hold that though theirs was a fight for the people, it was not a fight for the real democracy which I envisage. My democracy means that everyone is his own master. I have read sufficient history, and I have not seen such an experiment on such a large scale for the establishment of democracy by non-violence. Once you understand these things, you will forget differences between Hindus and Muslims.

The Resolution that is placed before you says that we don't want to remain frogs in a well. We are aiming at a World Federation. It can come only through non-violence. Disarmament is only possible if you use the matchless weapon of non-violence. There are people who may call me a visionary, but I tell you I am a real *bania* and my business is to obtain *Swaraj*. If you don't accept this Resolution, I won't be sorry for it. On the contrary, I would dance with joy because you would then relieve me of the tremendous responsibility which you are now going to place on me. I want you to adopt non-violence as a matter of policy. With me it is a creed, but, so far as you are concerned, I want you to accept it as a policy. As disciplined soldiers, you must accept it *in toto* and stick to it when you join the struggle.

—Press Report: 'Aug. 7, 1942.

## LXXII

### SPEECH AT THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE - II

*"I must not suppress the voice within me ... That voice tells me that I shall have to fight against the whole*

*world and stand alone; it also tells me: 'You are safe so long as you stare the world in the face, although the world may have blood-shot eyes. Do not fear that world, but go ahead with the fear of God in you.'*"

"I TAKE UP my task of leading you in this struggle, not as your commander, not as your controller, but as the humble servant of you all; and he who serves best becomes the chief among them. I am the chief servant of the nation; that is how I look at it", declared Mahatma Gandhi addressing the A.I.C.C. in English towards the end of his speech.

He added: "I want to share all the shocks that you have to face."

Gandhiji referred to the interpretation put in foreign countries on his utterances during the last three weeks, and said: "I know that, in the course of the last few weeks, I have forfeited the privilege of the friendship and the trust of many of my friends in India and abroad, so much so that they now have begun, some to doubt my wisdom and some even to doubt my honesty. My wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose, but honesty is a precious treasure to me."

Gandhiji, then, referred to the friendship which had grown between him and many Viceroys, and in particular, between him and Lord Linlithgow. "It is a friendship which has outgrown mere official relations. I hope Lord Linlithgow will bear me out, and personally I think there has sprung up between him and me a friendship. This is not a secret."

Gandhiji then referred to the deep friendship he cherished for the late C.F. Andrews and said: "At the present moment the spirit of Andrews is sweeping me, and Andrews seems to me to be the highest that I have known in the English. With Andrews I enjoyed a relationship, closer than which I have not enjoyed with any Indian. There was no secret between us; we exchanged our hearts every day. Whatever was in his heart, he would blurt out with-

out the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was a friend of Gurudev (Tagore), but he was awed by the presence of Gurudev.

"With this background, I want to declare to the world that whatever may be said to-day to the contrary, and although I may have forfeited the regard of many a friend of the West — even trust — of some of them — even for their love and for their friendship, I must not suppress the voice within me. Call it conscience, call it by anything you like; call it the promptings of my basic nature, I do not mind how you describe it, but there is something there. I have learnt psychology, and I know exactly what 'it' is, although I may not be able to describe it to you. That voice tells me that I shall have to fight against the whole world and stand alone. It also tells me: 'You are safe so long as you stare the world in the face, although the world may have blood-shot eyes. Do not fear that world, but go ahead with the fear of God in you.'

"That thing is within me. You have to forsake wife, friends, forsake everything in the world. I want to live the whole span of my life. But I don't think I will live so long. When I am gone, India will be free; and not only will India be free, but the whole world will be free.

"I do not believe that the Americans are free or that England is free; they may be free according to their conception. I know my purpose; I know what freedom is. English teachers have taught me its meaning. I must interpret that freedom according to what I can see and what I have experienced."

Gandhiji then referred to the work and philosophy of Dadabhoy Naoroji, Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta and others\* and said: "Unconsciously, from its very inception, the Congress has always been non-violent. I do not claim that every Congressman conforms to the highest principles of non-violence even as a policy. I know that there are many black sheep; but I am trusting them in general

\* Founders of the Indian National Congress.

without subjecting them to an examination. It is this fundamental trust that rules my life. From its very beginning, the Congress in its fundamental policy—which is to bring about *Swaraj*—has been non-violent.”

Urging all his critics to search their hearts before accusing him of dishonesty, Gandhiji said: “I want Englishmen and all the United Nations to examine their hearts and search their hearts what crime has the Congress committed in demanding independence to-day? Is it wrong to do so? Is it right to distrust that organization? I hope Englishmen won’t do it. I hope that it won’t be done by the President of the United States and by the Chinese Generalissimo Marshal Chiang-Kai-Shek, who is still fighting desperate battles with Japan for his existence. After having owned Jawaharlal as a comrade, I hope he won’t do it. I fell in love with Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek. She was my interpreter, and I have no reason to doubt that she was a faithful interpreter to her husband.”

Gandhiji added that Madame Chiang had not as yet said that we were wrong in demanding our independence. “I have great regard for British diplomacy, which has enabled them to hold the Empire so long. But now others have studied that diplomacy and are putting it into practice.”

Gandhiji asserted that “even if all the United Nations oppose me, even if the whole of India tries to persuade me that I am wrong, I will go ahead not for India’s sake alone, but for the sake of the world.”

Gandhiji declared that Britain had given India the greatest of provocations, but in spite of all that “we won’t hit below the belt. We have, so far, progressed in real gentlemanly fashion, we will not stoop to any such thing.”

Gandhiji, then, explained the difference between his non-embarrassment policy in the recent past, and his present policy. “That policy was not non-embarrassment, consistent with the honour and safety of India. There is

no inconsistency between what we demand to-day and what we demanded before", he added.

Addressing the United Nations, including Britain, Gandhiji said they had the opportunity now of a life-time to declare India free and prove their real intentions. "If they miss it, they will be missing the opportunity of a life-time, which never comes twice in the same generation, and history will say that they did not discharge their overdue debt to India. I ask for the blessings of the whole world, and I ask for the active assistance of the United Nations. I do not want to say anything more to them."

Gandhiji, continuing, said that he had always differentiated between Fascism and the Democracies, despite their many limitations and even between Fascism and British Imperialism.

Concluding Gandhiji said: "I have pledged the Congress and the Congress will do or die."

—Press Report: Aug. 8, 1942.

### LXXIII

## FREE INDIA'S ROLE

*"I dream of a world where there will be no strife between nations and nations. It is possible only if Great Britain, America and Russia contemplate such world peace."*

[To the question of the British News-Magazine "Cavalcade" whether he would outline his conception of the role of a Free India in the post-War world, with special relationship to the peoples of the British Commonwealth and the United States of America, Gandhiji replied:]

"If I have any faith in post-War policy, a Free National Government of India will promote a Commonwealth of all

World States, naturally including the British Commonwealth and America, and also, if possible, the belligerent States, so as to reduce to the minimum the possibility of armed conflict between different States."

Amplifying his reply in the course of a talk with the journalists, Gandhiji said:

"I have answered the question as a confirmed war resister, and if I became a party to the August Resolution and if I now suggest what I consider to be perfectly honourable solution, it is because thereby I expect to promote the war resistance effort.

"I dream of a world where there will be no strife between nations and nations. It is possible only if Great Britain, America and Russia contemplate such world peace. I deliberately omit China, for, unfortunately, China is not able like Russia, Britain or America to stand alone, though much bigger than all these three powerful nations and more ancient.

"China is still menaced by Japan and needs all the assistance that she can get before she can rise to her full height. I see no chance for the groaning world unless the three States now demonstrate to the world that they have one mind, that they are not putting forth the effort they are doing for any selfish design, but that they are truly fighting for all democracies on the face of the earth.

"My proposal is an acid test and I have no shadow of doubt that its hearty acceptance by Britain will immediately turn the scales and ensure the defeat of the belligerent Powers and fill the exploited nations of the earth with hope.\* You see, that I am, therefore, fighting for no small stake."

*—Press Report: July 21, 1944.*

\* "I hold that the effect of the declaration of India's independence, accompanied by simultaneous sincere action, should by itself take the wind out of the sails of the Axis Powers. And I should be surprised if they do not capitulate almost immediately on the declaration."

*—Press Report: August 3, 1944.*



## THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

*"I reiterate my conviction that there will be no peace for the Allies or the world unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war, and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud, and are determined to hammer out real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations."*

THOUGH I KNOW that silence is better than the spoken or written word, there are well-defined limitations in the application of the maxim. The San Francisco Conference is announced to meet shortly. I do not know its agenda. Probably, no outsider knows it. Whatever it may be, the Conference shall have much to do with the world-to-be after the so-called end of the War. I very much fear that behind the structure of world security sought to be raised, lurk mistrust and fear which breed war. Therefore, as a life-long believer in peace, as against war, it seems well for me to record my convictions in the matter.

I reiterate my conviction that there will be no peace for the Allies or the world unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war, and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud, and are determined to hammer out real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all war. In such a world only, the militarily weaker nations will be free from the fear of intimidation or exploitation.

An indispensable preliminary to peace is the complete freedom of India from all foreign control, not merely because it is a classic example of Imperialist domination, but specially because it is a big, ancient and cultured country which has fought for its freedom since 1920 deliberately by truth and non-violence as its only weapon.

Though the Indian soldier has fought not for India's freedom, he has shown during this War as never before that he is at least an equal to the best in his fighting qualities. I cite this to answer the charge that India's peaceful struggle is due to its lack of soldierly quality. The inevitable deduction that I draw from this is that non-violence of the strong is infinitely braver than their violence. That India may not yet have evolved such non-violence is another matter. If it is the case, it does not detract from the statement that it has battled non-violently for freedom and yet not without considerable success.

Freedom of India will demonstrate to all the exploited races of the earth that their freedom is very near, and that in no case will they henceforth be exploited.

Peace must be just. In order to be that, it must neither be punitive nor vindictive. Germany and Japan should not be humiliated. The strong are never vindictive. Therefore, fruits of peace must be equally shared. The effort then will be to turn them into friends. The Allies can prove their democracy by no other means.

It follows from the foregoing that there will be no armed peace imposed upon the forcibly disarmed. The retention of an international police will be a concession to human weakness, not by any means an emblem of peace.

If these foregoing essentials of peace are accepted, it follows that the camouflage of Indian representation through Indians nominated by British Imperialism should be dropped. Such representation will be worse than no representation. Either India at San Francisco is represented by an elected representative, or represented not at all.

The following from the Congress Resolution of August 8, 1942, shows clearly what Free India stands for:

"While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of Free Nations,

and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation of another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all.

"On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries. National armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a World Federal Defence Force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression. An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems."

Thus, the demand for Indian independence is in no way selfish. Its nationalism spells internationalism.

—Press Statement: April 17, 1945.

#### LXXV

### ALLIES' VICTORY IN EUROPE

*"The Allies had won, but their victory had been the result of superior arms and superior man-power. He (Gandhiji) could not enthuse over it as a victory of truth over falsehood."*

ADDRESSING MEMBERS of the Rashtra Seva Dal, Wai, Mahatma Gandhi said that they had just seen the end of a terrible war. It had made people doubt if truth really counted in this world. The Allies had won, but their victory had been the result of superior arms and superior man-power. He could not enthuse over it as a

victory of truth over falsehood. At the same time, he wanted to make it clear to them that a victory for the Axis would have been far worse.

The Axis had accepted violence as their creed. The Allies at least paid lip-service to peace and freedom and truth and non-violence. It was true that their actions belied their profession. The major part of humanity consisted of oppressed and enslaved nations. It was his conviction that if India could win *Swaraj* through truth and non-violence, she would be able to bring deliverance to all the other oppressed nations.

—*Press Report*: June 10, 1945.

# LXXVI

## ATOM BOMB Vs. NON-VIOLENCE

*"The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which, by its very nature, has an end."*

THERE HAVE BEEN cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in Truth and Non-violence? Has not the Atom Bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so, but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it, the Atom Bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which, by its very nature, has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world. In saying this, I know, that I have said nothing new. I merely bear witness to the fact. What is more, that force resides in

everybody, man, woman and child, irrespective of the colour of the skin. Only in many it lies dormant, but it is capable of being awakened by judicious training.

It is further to be observed that without the recognition of this truth and due effort to realize it, there is no escape from self-destruction. The remedy lies in every individual training himself for self-expression in every walk of life, irrespective of response by the neighbours.

—*Harijan*: Feb. 10, 1946.

#### LXXVII

### HOW TO CANALIZE HATRED

*"Many have preached non-violence through the lips while harbouring violence in the breast... Hypocrisy has acted as an ode to virtue, but it could never take its place. And so I plead for non-violence and yet more non-violence."*

HATRED IS IN the air and impatient lovers of the country will gladly take advantage of it, if they can, through violence to further the cause of independence. I suggest that it is wrong at any time and everywhere. But it is more wrong and unbecoming in a country where fighters for freedom have declared to the world that their policy is truth and non-violence.

Hatred, they argue, cannot be turned into love. Those who believe in violence will naturally use it by saying: 'Kill your enemy, injure him and his property wherever you can, whether openly or secretly as necessity requires'. The result will be deeper hatred and counter-hatred, and vengeance let loose on both sides. The recent War, whose embers have yet hardly died, loudly proclaims the bankruptcy of this use of hatred. And it remains to be seen whe-

ther the so-called victors have really won or whether they have not depressed themselves in seeking and trying to depress their enemies. It is a bad game at its best.

Some philosophers of action in this country improve upon the model and say: 'We shall never kill our enemy, but we shall destroy his property'. Perhaps, I do them an injustice when I call it 'his property', for the remarkable thing is that the so-called enemy has brought no property of his own, and what little he has brought he makes us pay for. Therefore, what we destroy is really our own. The bulk of it, whether in men or things, he produces here. So, what he really has is the custody of it. For the destruction, too, we have to pay through the nose and it is the innocent who are made to pay. That is the implication of punitive tax and all it carries with it. Non-violence in the sense of mere non-killing does not appear to me, therefore, to be any improvement on the technique of violence. It means slow torture, and when slowness becomes ineffective we shall immediately revert to killing and to the Atom Bomb which is the last word in violence to-day. Therefore, I suggested in 1920 the use of non-violence and its inevitable twin companion truth, for canalizing hatred into the proper channel. The hater hates not for the sake of hatred, but because he wants to drive away from his country the hated being or beings. He will, therefore, as readily achieve his end by non-violent as by violent means.

For the past 25 years, willingly or unwillingly, the Congress has spoken to the masses in favour of non-violence as against violence for regaining our lost liberty. We have also discovered through our progress that in the application of non-violence, we have been able to reach the mass mind far more quickly and far more extensively than ever before. And yet, if truth is told, as it must be, our non-violent action has been half-hearted. Many have preached non-violence through the lips while harbouring violence in the breast. But the unsophisticated mass mind has read the secret meaning hidden in our breasts, and the unconscious

reaction has not been altogether as it might have been. Hypocrisy has acted as an ode to virtue, but it could never take its place. And so I plead for non-violence and yet more non-violence. I do so not without knowledge but with sixty years' experience behind me. This is the critical moment, for the dumb masses are to-day starving. There are many ways that will suggest themselves to the wise reader as to how to apply the canons of non-violence to the present needs of the country.

—*Harijan*: Feb. 24, 1946.

#### LXXVIII

### THE WAY OF THE LORD

*"Mankind is at the cross roads. It has to make its choice between the Law of the Jungle and the Law of Humanity."*

IN EATING, sleeping and in the performance of other physical functions, man is not different from the brute. What distinguishes him from the brute is his ceaseless striving to rise above the brute on the moral plane. Mankind is at the cross roads. It has to make its choice between the Law of the Jungle and the Law of Humanity. We, in India, deliberately adopted the latter twenty-five years back, but, I am afraid, that whilst we profess to follow the higher way, our practice has not always conformed to our profession. We have always proclaimed from the housetops that non-violence is the way of the brave, but there are some amongst us who have brought *Ahimsa* into disrepute by using it as a weapon of the weak.

Let me say in all humility that *Ahimsa* belongs to the brave. Pritam has sung: *The Way of the Lord is for the Brave, not for the Coward*. By 'the Way of the Lord' is

here meant the way of Non-violence and Truth. I have said before that I do not envisage God other than Truth and Non-violence. If you have accepted the doctrine of *Ahimsa* without a full realization of its implications, you are at liberty to repudiate it. I believe in confessing one's mistakes and correcting them. Such confession strengthens one and purifies the soul. *Ahimsa* calls for the strength and courage to suffer without retaliation, to receive blows without returning any. But that does not exhaust its meaning. Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly. We have to cultivate that courage, if we are to win India's independence through Truth and Non-violence as proclaimed by the Congress. It is an ideal worth living for and dying for. Everyone of you who has accepted that ideal should feel that inasmuch as a single Englishwoman or child is assaulted, it is a challenge to your creed of non-violence and you should protect the threatened victim even at the cost of your life. Then alone you will have the right to sing: "*The Way of the Lord is for the Brave, not for the Coward.*" To attack defenceless Englishwomen and children, because one has a grievance against the present Government, hardly becomes a human being.

[From a speech at prayer gathering in Bombay  
on the evening of March 24, 1946.]

—*Harijan*: April 7, 1946.

#### LXXIX

### WEST AFRICAN NEGROES' QUESTIONS

*"The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others."*



Q. There are several religions in the world. They were all originated in foreign countries. Which one of these should Africa follow? Or, should she discover her own religion? If so, how?

A. It is wrong to say that all religions were originated in foreign countries. I had fairly extensive contact with Zulus and Bantus and I have found that the Africans have a religion of their own, though they may not have reasoned it out for themselves. I am not referring to the rites, ceremonies and fetishes that are prevalent among African tribes, but the religion of one Supreme God. You pray to that God. There are many religions, but Religion is only one. You should follow that one Religion. Foreigners might bring you Christianity. Christianity, as exemplified in Europe and America to-day, is a travesty of the teaching of Jesus. Then, there are Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and so on. You should absorb the best that is in each without fettering your choice and form your own religion.

Q. How can a continent like Africa fight down the fetters of slavery when it is so hopelessly divided?

A. I know your difficulty. If you think of the vast size of Africa, the distance and natural obstacles separating its various parts, the scattered condition of its people and the terrible divisions among them, the task might well appear to be hopeless. But there is a charm which can overcome all these handicaps. The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states. Therefore, the first thing is to say to yourself: "I shall no longer accept the role of a slave. I shall not obey the orders as such, but shall disobey them when they are in conflict with my conscience." The so-called master may lash you and try to force you to serve him. You will say: "No, I will not serve you for your money or under a threat". This may mean suffering. Your readi-

ness to suffer will light the torch of freedom which can never be put out.

Q. Africa and India both drink of the cup of slavery. What necessary steps can be taken to unite the two nations so as to present a common front?

A. You are right. India is not yet free and yet Indians have begun to realize that their freedom is coming, not because the White man says so, but because they have developed the power within. Inasmuch as India's struggle is non-violent, it is a struggle for the emancipation of all oppressed races against superior might. I do not propose mechanical joint action between them. "Each one has to find his own salvation" is true of this as well as of the other world. It is enough that there is a real moral bond between Asiatics and Africans. It will grow as time passes.

—*Harijan*: Feb. 24, 1946.

#### LXXX

### IMPLICATIONS OF 'QUIT INDIA'

*"We often make the mistake of thinking that we must first have things before we cease to covet them. This tempting argument leads to the prolongation of the agony."*

IN TERMS OF non-violence, 'Quit India' is a healthy, potent cry of the soul. It is not a slogan. It means the end, through means purely truthful and non-violent, of foreign rule and domination. It does not mean the foreigner's destruction, but his willing conversion to Indian life. In this scheme, there is no room for hatred of the foreigner. He is a man, even as we are. It is fear of him that gives rise to hatred. Fear gone, there can be no hatred.

Thus, his conversion implies our conversion, too. If we

cease to be inferiors, he cannot be our superior. His arsenals and his weapons, typified in their extreme in the Atom Bomb, should have no terror for us. It follows that we may not covet them. We often make the mistake of thinking that we must first have things before we cease to covet them. This tempting argument leads to the prolongation of the agony. Must I do all the evil I can, before I learn to shun it? Is it not enough to know the evil to shun it? If not, we should be sincere enough to admit that we love evil too well to give it up.

Let us assume that foreign rule is ended. What should the foreigner do? He could hardly be considered free when he was protected by British arms. As a free man, he will discover that it was wrong to possess privileges which the millions of India could not enjoy. He will live doing his duty as behoves a son of India. He will no longer live at India's expense. On the contrary, he will give India all his talents and by his services render himself indispensable to the land of his adoption.

If this is true of the European, how much more true must it be for those Anglo-Indians and others, who have adopted European manners and customs in order to be classed as Europeans, demanding preferential treatment? All such people will find themselves ill at ease, if they expect continuation of the favoured treatment hitherto enjoyed by them. They should rather feel thankful that they will be disburdened of preferential treatment, to which they had no right by any known canon of reasoning and which was derogatory to their dignity.

We have all—rulers and ruled—been living so long in a stifling unnatural atmosphere that we might well feel in the beginning that we have lost the lungs for breathing the invigorating ozone of freedom. If the reality comes in an orderly, that is a non-violent manner because the parties feel that it is right, it will be a revealing lesson for the world.

—*Harijan*: April 7, 1946.

LXXXI  
LETS US PRAY

*"Prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life, culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour."*

THERE IS LITTLE doubt that India is about to reach her cherished goal of political independence. Let the entrance be prayerful. Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.

Let us then pray and find out what we have meant by non-violence and how we shall retain the freedom gained by its use. If our non-violence is of the weak, it follows that we shall never be able, by such non-violence, to retain freedom. But it follows also that we shall not, for some length of time at any rate, be able to defend ourselves by force of arms, if only because we have neither them nor the knowledge of their use. We have not even the requisite discipline. The result is that we shall have to rely upon another nation's help, not as equals but as pupils upon their teachers, if the word 'inferiors' jars upon our ears.

Hence, <sup>\*</sup>there is nothing but non-violence to fall back upon for retaining our freedom, even as we had to do for gaining it. This means exercise of non-violence against all those who call themselves our opponents. This should not mean much for a man who has used himself to non-violence for nearly three decades. It is summed up in "die for your honour and freedom", instead of "kill if necessary and be killed in the act". What does a brave soldier do? He kills only if necessary and risks his life in the act. Non-violence demands greater courage and sacrifice. Why should it be comparatively easy for a man to risk

death in the act of killing, and almost superhuman for him to do so in the act of sparing life? It seems to be gross self-deception to think that we can risk death, if we learn and practise the art of killing but cannot do so otherwise. But for the hypnotism induced by the repetition of an untruth, we should not grossly deceive ourselves.

But the critic or the scoffer will ask, why bring in prayer if the matter is so simple as you put it? The answer is that prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life, culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour.

Undoubtedly, prayer requires a living faith in God. Successful *Satyagraha* is inconceivable without that faith. God may be called by any other name so long as it connotes the living Law of Life—in other words, the Law and the Law-giver rolled into one.

—*Harijan*: April 14, 1946.

#### LXXXII

### WHAT IS THE LAW?

*"The fruits of peace are infinitely superior to those of war. Ingenuity employed in devising methods of destruction lowers; whereas when employed in devising ways of building, it befits mankind."*

'Confused' writes:

"I grant that Italy, Germany and Japan have lost their power, but is the loss due to their faith in violence, as you would say, or is it due to their exhaustion brought about by fortunes of war? Will you hold that Britain, Russia and America have been successful because of their non-violence?"

Thus argues a correspondent whom I have paraphrased without diminishing the force of his argument. The questioner has failed to perceive that in the writing quoted by him,\* I have said nothing about the so-called victorious Powers. But I have said elsewhere that their victory is an empty boast if they do not learn the lesson while there is time, and do not shape their life in accordance with the Law of Non-violence. I believe wholly in the truth that "those who take the sword will perish by the sword". There is no doubt that the victors employed the same means as the vanquished. There was only a question of degree. The victorious parties already seem to be on the verge of quarrelling among themselves. If another war has not already begun, it is because no one is ready to enter upon it. After all, men are not machines. They cannot be continually fighting without being reduced to the state of beasts. One has to hope, for the sake of humanity, that they will do some hard thinking and discover the truth that the common man, of whom the world is composed, gains nothing by cutting his fellow-man's throat, and that the fruits of peace are infinitely superior to those of war. Ingenuity employed in devising methods of destruction lowers; whereas when employed in devising ways of building, it befits mankind.

—*Harijan*: April 14, 1946.

\* "Look at Italy. Garibaldi was a great man. He brought deliverance to Italy. And Mussolini did make her look great. But where is she to-day? Look at Japan, look at Germany. The very violence which brought them to the pinnacle of power has razed them to the ground. And, has not the Atom Bomb proved the futility of all violence? And yet we are crazy enough to think that we can win *Swaraj* by breaking a few skulls and destroying property which, after all is said and done, is our own. I am sure, out of this orgy of violence the people will learn the lesson of non-violence."

—*Harijan*: March 10, 1946.

## INDEPENDENCE

*"Independence of my dream means Rama-Rajya, i.e., the Kingdom of God on Earth. I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene."*

FRIENDS HAVE REPEATEDLY challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that independence of my dream means *Rama-Rajya*, i.e. the Kingdom of God on Earth.\* I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.

In concrete terms, then, the independence should be political, economic and moral.

'Political' necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form.

'Economic' means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counter-part. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

'Moral' means freedom from armed defence forces. My

\*Q. What is Rama-Rajya?

A: It can be religiously translated as Kingdom of God on Earth; politically translated it is perfect democracy in which inequalities based on possession and non-possession, colour, race or creed or sex vanish. In it, land and state belong to the people, justice is prompt, perfect and cheap and, therefore, there is freedom of worship, speech and the Press—all this because of the reign of the self-imposed law of moral restraint.

Such a State must be based on Truth and Non-violence, and must consist of prosperous, happy and self-contained villages and village communities. It is a dream that may never be realized. I find happiness in living in that dreamland, ever trying to realize it in the quickest way."

—Press Report: June 12, 1945.

conception of *Rama-Rajya* excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height.

Though Mr. Churchill is claimed to have won the War for the British, he has in his Aberdeen speech uttered words of wisdom from the standpoint of a radical non-violent reformer. He knows, if any panoplied warrior knows, what havoc the two wars of our generation have wrought. Nothing will be found to have gone wrong, if mankind recoils from the horrors of war. The blood-letting that men have undergone to the point of whiteness will not have been in vain, if it has taught us that we must freely give our own blood in the place of taking other peoples' blood. be the cause ever so noble or ignoble.

If the Cabinet Mission\* 'delivers the goods,' India will have to decide whether attempting to become a military power she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message in answer to the pessimism described above, or whether she will, by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy, prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory.

—*Harijan*: May 5, 1946.

\*"The Mission are coming fresh after a bloody victory. They have now an opportunity to add to it the laurels of a bloodless peace. It will be a glorious thing for them and the world if they rise to the occasion and do justice to India, even though it might mean reducing themselves (it won't be so in fact) to insignificance. That would be the height of non-violence. But miracles have happened in the world."

—*Harijan*: April 7, 1946.



## CERTAIN QUESTIONS

*"The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army, and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army."*

A LONDON FRIEND has put seven question on the working of non-violence. Though similar questions have been dealt with in 'Young India' or 'Harijan', it is profitable to answer them in a single article, if perchance the answers may prove helpful.

Q. 1:—Is it possible for a modern State (which is essentially based on force) to offer non-violent resistance for countering internal as well as external forces of disorder? Or, is it necessary that people wanting to offer non-violent resistance should first of all divest themselves of State-authority and place themselves *vis-a-vis* the opponent entirely in a private capacity?

A:— It is not possible for a modern State based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder, whether external or internal. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is claimed that a State can be based on non-violence, *i.e.*, it can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force. Such a State was Ashoka's. The example can be repeated. But the case does not become weak even if it be shown that Ashoka's State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined on its merits.

Q. 2:—Do you think that it would be possible for a Congress Government to deal with foreign aggression or internal riots in an entirely non-violent manner?

A:— It is certainly possible for a Congress Government

to deal with "foreign aggression or internal riots" in a non-violent manner. That the Congress may not share my belief is quite possible. If the Congress changes its course, the change will prove nothing save that the non-violence hitherto offered was of the weak and that the Congress has no faith in State non-violence.

Q. 3:—Does not the knowledge that the opponent is wedded to non-violence often encourage the bully?

A:— The bully has his opportunity when he has to face non-violence of the weak. Non-violence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.

Q. 4:— What policy would you advocate if a section of the Indian people tries to enforce by sword a selfish measure which is not only repugnant to others but also basically unjust? While it is possible for an unofficial organization to offer non-violent resistance in such a case, is it also possible for the Government of the day to do so?

A:— The question assumes a case which can never exist. A non-violent State must be broad-based on the will of an intelligent people, well able to know its mind and act up to it. In such a State, the assumed section can only be negligible. It can never stand against the deliberate will of the overwhelming majority represented by the State. The Government of the day is not outside the people. It is the will of the overwhelming majority. If it is expressed non-violently, it cannot be a majority of one but nearer 99 against 1 in a hundred.

Q. 5:—Is not non-violent resistance by the militarily strong more effective than that by the militarily weak?

A:— This is a contradiction in terms. There can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able to demonstrate their non-violence to the

world and, therefore, also to their opponents. Those who are strong in non-violence will not mind whether they are opposed by the militarily weak people or the strongest.

Q. 6:—What should be the training and discipline for a non-violent army? Should not certain aspects of conventional military training form a part of the syllabus?

A:—A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army.

Q. 7:—Is it not better under existing circumstances that countries like India and England should maintain full military efficiency while resolving to give non-violent resistance a reasonable trial before taking any military step?

A:—The foregoing answers should make it clear that under no circumstances can India and England give non-violent resistance a reasonable chance whilst they are both maintaining full military efficiency. At the same time, it is perfectly true that all military powers carry on negotiations for peaceful adjustment of rival disputes. But here we are not discussing preliminary peace parleys before appealing to the arbitrament of war. We are discussing a final substitute for armed conflict called war, in naked terms, mass murder.

—*Harijan*: May 12, 1946.

## HOW CAN VIOLENCE BE STOPPED?

*"The Atom Bomb has not stopped violence. No man can stop violence. God alone can do so. Men are but instruments in His hands."*

Q. Some time back a military officer in Poona, who is about to return to England, said to me that violence was on the increase in India and would further increase as people were gradually turning away from the path of non-violence. "We in the West," he said, "not only believe in violence but our society is based on it. Several subject races have won their independence through violence and are to-day living in peace. We have discovered the Atom Bomb for stopping violence. The last Great War is a case in point." Continuing the military officer said, "Gandhiji has shown your people the way of non-violence. Has he discovered any such power as the Atom Bomb which will at once convert people to non-violence and bring about a rule of peace? Cannot Gandhiji's 'Atom Bomb' stop people from following the path of violence? Ask Gandhiji to exercise his power over the people and tell them to give up all thoughts of violence and adopt his creed. If he cannot wean his people to-day from the terrible violence that is spreading all over the country, I tell you that he will live a disappointed man and his life's work will be ruined."

A. There is much confusion of thought in this question. The Atom Bomb has not stopped violence. People's hearts are full of it, and preparations for a Third World War may even be said to be going on. While it would be absurd to say that violence has ever brought peace to mankind, it cannot either be said that violence never achieves anything.

That I shall have to repent if I cannot stop violence does not enter into the picture of non-violence. No man can

stop violence. God alone can do so. Men are but instruments in His hands. Mere material means cannot stop violence, but this does not mean that material means should not be employed for the purpose. The deciding factor is God's grace. He works according to His law and, therefore, violence will also be stopped in accordance with that law. Man does not and can never know God's law fully. Therefore, we have to try as far as lies in our power. I hold that our experiment in non-violence has succeeded to a fair extent in India. There is, therefore, no room for the pessimism shown in the question. Finally, *Ahimsa* is one of the world's great principles which no power on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself may die in trying to vindicate the ideal, but *Ahimsa* will never die. And the Gospel of *Ahimsa* can be spread only through believers dying for the cause.

—*Harijan*: May 19, 1946.

#### LXXXVI

### WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

*"The real 'White man's burden' is not insolently to dominate coloured or black people under the guise of protection; it is to desist from the hypocrisy which is eating into them. It is time White men learnt to treat every human being as their equal."*

BEFORE THE Segregation Law\* was passed, White men known to be respectable, had carried anti-Asiatic agitation to the point of frenzy. Not satisfied with their triumph in having legislation compelling segregation passed probably

\* Reference here is to the Segregation Law of the Union Parliament of South Africa against which *Satyagraha* was organized by the Indian Community.

beyond expectation, the more advanced section among the agitators have become the executioners of their own laws. They do not know that they are thereby defaming the White man's name.

My appeal to the White men and women, who have regard for laws for which they have voted, is that they should create public opinion against hooliganism and lynch law.

Passive resistance is aimed at removal, in a most approved manner, of bad laws, customs or other evils and is designed to be a complete and effective substitute for forcible methods including hooliganism and lynch law. It is an appeal to the heart of man. Often reason fails. It is dwarfed by self. The theory is that an adequate appeal to the heart never fails. Seeming failure is not of the Law of *Satyagraha*, but of incompetence of the *Satyagrahi* by the whatever cause induced. It may not be possible to give a complete historical instance. The name of Jesus at once comes to the lips. It is an instance of brilliant failure. And he has been acclaimed in the West as Prince of Passive Resisters. I showed, years ago, in South Africa, that the adjective 'passive' was a misnomer, at least as applied to Jesus. He was the most active resister known perhaps to history. His was non-violence *par excellence*. But I must no longer stray from my main subject. It is the resistance of the Jesus type that the White hooligans are seeking to thwart. Let us hope that our countrymen's heroic resistance will not only shame the hooligans into silence, but prove the precursor of the repeal of the law that disfigures that statute book of South Africa. In concrete form, what pure suffering, wholly one-sided, does is to stir public opinion against a wrong. Legislators are, after all, representatives of the public. In obedience to it they have enacted a wrong. They have to reverse the process when the same public, awakened to the wrong, demands its removal.

The real 'White man's burden' is not insolently to dominate coloured or black people under the guise of protection; it is to desist from the hypocrisy which is eating into them.

It is time White men learnt to treat every human being as their equal. There is no mystery about whiteness of the skin. It has repeatedly been proved that, given equal opportunity a man, be he of any colour or country, is fully equal to any other.

Therefore, White men throughout the world, and especially of India, should act upon their fellowmen in South Africa and call upon them not to molest Indian resisters who are bravely struggling to preserve the self-respect of Indians in the Union and the honour of their motherland. "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." Or, do they take in vain the name of Him who said this? Have they banished from their hearts the great coloured Asiatic, who gave to the world the above message? Do they forget that the greatest of the teachers of mankind were all Asiatics and did not possess a white face? These, if they descended on earth and went to South Africa, will all have to live in the segregated areas and be classed as Asiatics and coloured people, unfit by law to be equals of Whites.

Is a civilization worth the name which requires for its existence the very doubtful prop of racial legislation and lynch law? The silver lining to the cloud that hangs over the devoted heads of our countrymen lies in the plucky action of Rev. Scott, a White clergyman, and his equally White fellow-workers, who have undertaken to share the sufferings of the Indian resisters.

—*Harijan*: June 30, 1946.

#### LXXXVII

### ATOM BOMB AND AHIMSA

*"The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs, even as violence cannot be*

*by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love."*

IT HAS BEEN suggested by American friends that the Atom Bomb will bring in *Ahimsa* (non-violence) as nothing else can. It will, if it is meant that its destructive power will so disgust the world that it will turn it away from violence for the time being. This is very like a man glutting himself with dainties to the point of nausea and turning away from them only to return with redoubled zeal after the effect of nausea is well over. Precisely in the same manner will the world return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.

Often does good come out of evil. But this is God's, not man's plan. Man knows that only evil can come out of evil, as good out of good.

The atomic energy, though harnessed by American scientists and army men for destructive purposes, is undoubtedly within the realm of possibility. But that is not what was meant by my American friends. They were not so simple as to put a question which connoted an obvious truth. An incendiary uses fire for his destructive and nefarious purpose, a housewife makes daily use of it in preparing nourishing food for mankind.

So far as I can see, the Atom Bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The Atom Bomb brought an empty victory to the Allied arms, but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see. Forces of Nature act in a mysterious manner. We can but solve the mystery by deducing the unknown result from the known results of similar events. A slave-holder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or his deputy in the



cage holding the slave. Let no one run away with the idea that I wish to put in a defence of Japanese misdeeds in pursuance of Japan's unworthy ambition. The difference was only one of degree. I assume that Japan's greed was more unworthy. But the greater unworthiness conferred no right on the less unworthy of destroying without mercy men, women and children of Japan in a particular area.\*

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs, even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. I am aware that I am repeating what I have many times stated before and practised to the best of my ability and capacity. What I first stated was itself nothing new. It was as old as the hills. Only I recited no copy-book maxim, but definitely announced what I believed in every fibre of my being. Sixty years of practice in various walks of life has only enriched the belief which experience of friends has fortified. It is, however, the central truth by which one can stand alone without flinching. I believe in what Max Muller said years ago, namely, that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it.

—*Harijan*: July 7, 1946.

\*“I regard the employment of the Atom Bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science.”

What was the antidote? Had it antiquated non-violence? “No”, was Gandhiji's reply. On the contrary, non-violence was the only thing that was now left in the field. “It is the only thing that the Atom Bomb cannot destroy. I did not move a muscle when I first heard that the Atom Bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary, I said to myself: ‘Unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.’”

—*Harijan*: Sept. 29, 1946.

## WHAT USE AHIMSA?

*"My Ahimsa is neither maimed nor weak. It is all-powerful. Where there is Ahimsa, there is Truth; and Truth is God. How He manifests Himself, I cannot say. All I know is that He is all-pervading and where He is, all is well."*

Q. Wherever in the world to-day one casts one's eye, there is nothing but violence and power-politics to be seen. And this obtains even in democratic countries like England and America. Have you pondered as to what your *Ahimsa* can do under such circumstances?

A. It is true that power-politics exist everywhere, but you are very much mistaken if you imagine that true democracy obtains either in England or America. The voice of the people may be said to be God's voice, the voice of the *Panchayat*. But how can there be the voice of God where the people themselves are the exploiters as England or America? They live on the coloured races by exploiting them. If the voice of the people is the voice of God, they will be above party. His scales will ever be evenly weighed with Truth and Non-violence. This statement embraces my reply. My *Ahimsa* is neither maimed nor weak. It is all-powerful. Where there is *Ahimsa*, there is Truth; and Truth is God. How He manifests Himself, I cannot say. All I know is that He is all-pervading and where He is, all is well. There is, therefore, one law for all. Wherever in the world Truth and Non-violence reign supreme, there is peace and bliss. That these exist nowhere shows that they are hidden from man for the time being. But they cannot disappear for ever. That faith must sustain the faithful.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 29, 1946.

LXXXIX  
TO END WAR

*"I have no doubt that unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence, of which the war is the natural expression and Atom Bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world".*

Q. How do you think the succession of wars such as we have witnessed of late can be stopped?

A. I have no doubt that unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence, of which war is the natural expression and Atom Bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world. I tried to speak out during the War and wrote open letters to the British people, to Hitler and to the Japanese and was dubbed a fifth columnist for my pains.

Q. But non-violence might take a long time to act. But for the Second Front, there probably would have been no Russia.

A. All these are arguments dictated by reason. It is not permitted me to think in these terms, or else I would be denying my faith which to-day burns brighter than ever in spite of all the bitter experience that I have had. History provides us with a whole series of miracles\* of masses of people being converted to a particular view-point in the twinkling of an eye. Take the Boer War. It has given to

\* Q. So, you believe in miracles?

A. I do and I do not. God does not work through miracles. But the Divine Mind is revealed in a flash and it appears like a miracle to man. We do not know God, we know Him only through the working of His law. He and His law are one. There is nothing outside His law. Even earthquakes and tempests do not occur without His will—not a blade of grass grows but He wills it. Satan is here only on His sufferance, not independently of Him."

—*Harijan*: April 7, 1946.

the English language the word 'Maffeking'. People went mad on the Maffeking Day. Yet inside of two years, the whole British nation underwent a transformation. Henry Campbell Bannerman became the Premier and practically all the gains of war were given up. The recent Labour victory at the polls is another instance in point. To me it is a sufficient miracle that, in spite of his oratory and brilliance, Churchill should cease to be the idol of the British people who till yesterday hung on his lips and listened to him in awe. All these instances are enough to sustain the faith of a believer like me that, when all other powers are gone, one will remain, call it God, Nature, or whatever you like.

—*Harijan*: Nov. 10, 1946.

## XC

## THE SPINNING WHEEL AND THE ATOM BOMB

*"It is a very curious commentary on the West that although it professes Christianity, there is no Christianity or Christ in the West, or there should have been no War. That is how I understand the message of Jesus."*

*Freeman*:\* Has the spinning wheel a message for America? Can it serve as a counter weapon to the Atom Bomb?

*Gandhiji*: I do feel that it has a message for the U.S.A. and the whole world. But it cannot be until India has demonstrated to the world that it has made the spinning wheel its own, which it has not done to-day. The fault is not of the wheel. I have not the slightest doubt that the saving of India and of the world lies in the wheel. If India becomes the slave

\* Mr. Andrew Freeman of the 'New York Post.'

of the machine, then I say: "Heaven save the world". India has a far nobler mission, *viz.*, to establish friendship and peace in the world. Peace cannot be established through mere conferences. Peace is being broken, as we all see, even while conferences are being held.

*Freeman:* It seems so tragic, India must lead the way and India is in turmoil. If any country can really take up the wheel, it is India. Do you think it will?

*Gandhiji:* It is doing so, but I confess the process is very slow. Pandit Nehru called *Khadi* the 'Livery of our Freedom'. It cannot be that so long as it is the consolation of cranks and paupers only. There are many things that are not possible for man to accomplish. But everything is possible for God. If there is no living Power called God, the spinning wheel has no place.

*Freeman:* Those who spin are not called cranks here?

*Gandhiji:* No, I used that expression to anticipate what Americans would say. I allow myself to be called by that name to protect myself. I was described by a friend as a 'practical idealist'.

*Freeman:* As a fairly intelligent human being and an American, I can only say that though many Americans would call spinners cranks, there are not a few who are thinking hard. Something has to be found that would save civilization from destruction. Life must be simplified.

*Gandhiji:* Human personality cannot be sustained in any other way. I stand by what is implied in the phrase '*Unto This Last.*' That book marked the turning point in my life. We must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us. All must have equal opportunity. Given this opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth. That is what the spinning wheel symbolizes.

*Freeman:* Would you like the Americans to take to the spinning wheel?

*Gandhiji:* Yes. But I do not know whether it will be taken up by anybody before it is well-established here.

If, on the other hand, India adopts it for clothing itself, I won't need to tell the world. It will adopt it of itself. To-day, there is such an onslaught on India of Western machinery, that for India to withstand it successfully would be nothing short of a miracle. I must confess that to-day everything seems to point to the contrary. Look at our internecine quarrels.

*Freeman:* But you have not given up hope.

*Gandhiji:* I cannot so long as I have faith in that living Power who is more with us than we know. But let me ask you a counter-question. Has America, with all its Mammon worship, abolished unemployment, poverty, corruption, Tammany Hall?

*Freeman:* The answer is obvious.

*Gandhiji:* Has England? Has she not still to grapple with the problems that baffle her? It is a very curious commentary on the West that although it professes Christianity, there is no Christianity or Christ in the West or there should have been no War. That is how I understand the message of Jesus. There is much ignorance and superstition in India. But deep down in us is that faith in God — that instinct for religion.

*Freeman:* All newspapermen and others have sensed that. But I must confess, there are moments when I feel it is hopeless. Look at the recent attack on Pandit Nehru in the tribal area from which I have just returned, and the happenings in East Bengal. You, too, must at times have felt the hopelessness of it all. Would you say Islam has repudiated its Teacher, as Christianity of to-day has its Jesus?

*Gandhiji:* I have said so openly.\* Where is Mohammed

\* "To-day in the West, people talk of Christ, but it is really the Anti-Christ that rules their lives. Similarly, there are people who talk of Islam, but really follow the way of Satan. It is a deplorable state of affairs. We are afraid of people professing religion other than our own. We think they will crush us, forgetting that no one can crush us if we have made God our Refuge. The hymn that has been sung describes how God has redeemed sinners. How much more, then, would He do for His devotees? But they must be devotees of God in the true sense of the term. If people follow

and his message which is Peace? I said recently at a public gathering that if Mohammed came to-day, he would disown many of his so-called followers and own me as a true Muslim, as Jesus would own me as a true Christian.

*Freeman:* How can we bring man back to God or the teaching of Jesus or that of Mohammed?

*Gandhiji:* I might give the answer that Jesus gave to one of his followers: "Do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, not merely say Lord, Lord." That holds true of you, me and everybody. If we have faith in the living God, all will be well with us. I hope not to lose that faith even to my dying day. In spite of my numerous failings and shortcomings, of which I am but too well aware, my faith in God is burning brighter every day. If it did not, I would take the same prescription that I gave to women threatened with dishonour and with no prospect of help or escape, *viz.*, commit suicide.

*Freeman:* Have you thought of the *Charkha* as a therapeutic agent?

*Gandhiji:* I have read some literature on the subject sent to me by a Glasgow professor. A retired Superintendent of a jail in Bengal, too, wrote to me describing the use of a spinning wheel for curing lunatics, particularly by virtue of the soothing effect of its rhythmic motion.

*Freeman:* I propose to interpret the *Charkha* to Americans as a 'thinking machine'. I found, while I was attending my spinning class, that, if alone with it, it made me think. If only Americans could get down to spin, they might be able to do some thinking, for which otherwise

the way of God, there would not be all that corruption and profiteering that we see in the world. The rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer. Hunger, nakedness and death stare one in the face. These are not the marks of the Kingdom of God but that of Satan, Ravana or the Anti-Christ. We cannot expect to bring the Reign of God on Earth by merely repeating His name with the lips. Our conduct must conform to His ways instead of Satan's."

—*Harijan*: June 23, 1946.

they get no time. It might make them forget the Atom Bomb.

—*Harijan*: Nov. 17, 1946.

## XCI

## CHILDREN OF VIOLENCE

*"The people of Europe talk of peace, but they harbour war in their hearts. Unless they shed violence from their hearts, peace could not be had."*

MONSIEUR RAYMOND CARTIER, a French journalist, interviewed Gandhiji when the latter was undergoing Nature Cure treatment. Covered in mud plasters, Gandhiji looked rather grotesque. M. Raymond Cartier was asked if he would like to meet Gandhiji in such a state. He said he would like to.

"*Comment allez vous?*" (How do you do?) asked Gandhiji in French as M. Raymond Cartier entered the room. The visitor was agreeably surprised on hearing Gandhiji greeting him in French.

Gandhiji told the French journalist that he had read a little of Victor Hugo in his school days and that he still remembered Jean Valjean crawling through the streets of Paris, and added: "I had been to Paris thrice and I wanted to stay in cottages. It is unfortunate that the first city of the world's luxury—a city which is known for its modern fashion and luxury—had miserable slums lying in the heart of the city."

Replying to M. Raymond Cartier's question as to what he thought about the present condition of Europe, Gandhiji said: "The people of Europe talk of peace, but they harbour war in their hearts. Unless they shed violence from their hearts, peace could not be had."



When the last War broke out, Gandhiji had said that unless Europe changed its ways, that War could be only a prelude to a third and more disastrous war.

M. Raymond asked: "We are children of violence in Europe, how do you expect us to become non-violent?"

In reply Gandhiji said if they continued like that, they were sure to perish. What had happened in Europe was that Hitlerism had only been destroyed by super-Hitlerism, and that chain was endless. It would go on like that.

M. Raymond asked if the remedy lay in new form of education.

Gandhiji said the education must be of a new type for the sake of creation of a new world. He referred to Aldous Huxley who, he observed, represented a new type of thought which was working in the mind of Europe to-day. It might be in a minority to-day, but if Europe was to save itself from suicide, something along lines of non-violence had to be adopted.

Asked as to how it would be possible to destroy Hitlerism by non-violence, Gandhiji said that was what we had to find out. Otherwise, if they depended upon superior violence in order to destroy violence of Hitlerism type, then small nations would have hardly any chance of survival. It was only when a nation individually refused to be beaten by Hitlerism or any combination of forces of violence, and stuck to its post at the cost of its life but not at the cost of its honour, that a nation had a chance of survival. So that non-violence alone was the only guarantee of protection against the heaviest odds. Unless we could develop this courage and this type of resistance, democracy could never survive.

Gandhiji once again referred to Victor Hugo's work *Les Misérables* and recalled the clergyman's son, who represented the type of courage to which he was referring.

Aldous Huxley's *Perennial Philosophy* was lying on Gandhiji's table as he talked with M. Raymond.

—*Press Report*: Dec. 20, 1946.

## THE MESSAGE OF ASIA

*"What I want you to understand is the message of Asia. It is not to be learnt through the Western spectacles or by imitating the Atom Bomb. If you want to give a message to the West, it must be the message of Love and the message of Truth."*

[Addressing the concluding session of the Inter-Asian Relations Conference on the 2nd April, 1947, at Delhi, Gandhiji said:]

I WAS WONDERING as to what I was to speak to you. I wanted to collect my thoughts but, let me confess to you, I had no time. Yet I had promised yesterday that I would try to say a few words. While I was coming with Badshah Khan\*, I asked for a little piece of paper and a pencil. I got a pen instead of a pencil. I tried to scribble a few words. You will be sorry to hear from me that that piece of paper is not by my side, though I remember what I wanted to say.

You, friends, have not seen the real India and you are not meeting in conference in the midst of real India. Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lahore—all these are big cities and are, therefore, influenced by the West.

I then thought of a story. It was in French and was translated for me by an Anglo-French philosopher. He was an unselfish man. He befriended me without having known me, because he always sided with the minorities. I was not then in my own country. I was not only in a hopeless minority, but in a despised minority too. I was a *coolie* lawyer. At that time we had no *coolie* doctors, we had no *coolie* lawyers. I was the first in the field. You know perhaps what is meant by the word *coolie*.

\* Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the beloved leader of the Pathans of the N. W. Frontier Province.

This friend—his mother was a Frenchwoman and his father an Englishman—said: “I want to translate for you a French story. There were three scientists who went out from France in search of Truth. They went to different parts of Asia. One of them found his way to India. He began to search. He went to the so-called cities of those times — naturally this was before British occupation, before even the Moghul period. He saw the so-called high-caste people, men and women, till he felt at a loss. Finally, he went to a humble cottage in a humble village. That cottage was a *bhangi* cottage and there he found the Truth that he was in search of.”

If you really want to see India at its best, you have to find it in the humble *bhangi* homes of such villages. There are 7,00,000 of such villages, and 38 crores of people inhabit them.

If some of you see the villages, you will not be fascinated by the sight. You will have to scratch below the dung-heap. I do not pretend to say that they were ever places of paradise. To-day, they are really dung-heaps. They were not like that before. What I speak is not from history, but from what I have seen myself. I have travelled from one end of India to the other, and have seen the miserable specimens of humanity with lustreless eyes. They are India. In these humble cottages, in the midst of these dung-heaps, are to be found the humble *bhangis* in whom you find the concentrated essence of wisdom.

Again, I have learnt from books —books written in English by English historians. We read books written in English by historians, but we do not write in our own mother-tongue or in the national language Hindustani. We study our history through English books rather than through the originals. That is the cultural conquest which India has undergone.

[Stating that wisdom had come to the West from the East, Gandhiji said:]

The first of these wise men was Zoroaster. He belonged

to the East. He was followed by Buddha who belonged to the East—India. Who followed Buddha? Jesus who came from the East. Before Jesus was Moses who belonged to Palestine though he was born in Egypt. After Jesus came Mohammed. I omit any reference to Krishna and Rama and other lights. I do not call them lesser lights, but they are less known to the literary world. All the same, I do not know a single person in the world to match these men of Asia. And, then, what happened? Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that. I would not talk any further.

I have told you the story in order to make you understand that what you see in the big cities is not the real India. Certainly, the carnage that is going on before our very eyes is a shameful thing. As I said yesterday, do not carry the memory of that carnage beyond the confines of India.

What I want you to understand is the message of Asia. It is not to be learnt through the Western spectacles or by imitating the Atom Bomb. If you want to give a message to the West, it must be the message of Love and the message of Truth. I do not want merely to appeal to your head. I want to capture your heart.

In this age of democracy, in this age of awakening of the poorest of the poor, you can re-deliver this message with the greatest emphasis. You will complete the conquest of the West, not through vengeance because you have been exploited, but with real understanding. I am sanguine if all of you put your hearts together—not merely heads—to understand the secret of the message these wise men of the East have left to us, and if we really become worthy of that great message, the conquest of the West will be completed. This conquest will be loved by the West itself.

The West is to-day pining for wisdom. It is despairing of the multiplication of the Atom Bombs, because Atom Bombs mean utter destruction not merely of the West but of the whole world, as if the prophesy of the Bible is going

to be fulfilled and there is to be a perfect deluge. It is up to you to tell the world of its wickedness and sin—that is the heritage your teachers and my teachers have taught Asia.  
—*Harijan*: April 20, 1947.

## XCIII

## TO SOUTH AFRICA

*"The future is surely not with the so-called White races if they keep themselves in purdah. The attitude of unreason will mean a Third War which sane people should avoid."*

FIELD MARSHAL SMUTS is a trustee for Western civilization. I still cling to the hope that he will not sustain it on the suppression of Asiatics and Africans. South Africa should present a blend of the three.

To the people of South Africa, to whom I am no stranger, I would say that they should not make the position of their representatives impossible by their unwarranted prejudice against colour. The future is surely not with the so-called White races if they keep themselves in *purdah*. The attitude of unreason will mean a Third War which sane people should avoid. Political co-operation among all the exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual goodwill, if it is wisely directed and based on Truth and Non-violence.

I have no doubt that those South African Indians who seek to create a division will do harm to themselves and to the great cause of liberty for which the movement of *Satyagraha* has stood and must stand.

To the *Satyagrahis* I would advise strict adherence to the fundamentals of *Satyagraha*, which literally means Force of Truth, and this is for ever invincible. It is a good sign that

they have a progressive European group solidly behind them. The *Satyagrahis* of South Africa should know that they have India at their back in their struggle for preserving the self-respect of the Indians in South Africa.

—*Harijan*: May 25, 1947.

## XCIV

## INDIANS OVERSEAS

*"Those who agree that racial inequality must be removed and yet do nothing to fight the evil are impotent. I cannot have anything to say to such people. After all, the under-dogs will have to earn their own salvation."*

Q. In case the UNO fails to do justice by the Indians in South Africa, what line of action would you advise the South African Indians to take?

A. I cannot even think of failure in *Satyagraha*. It never fails. This is my firm belief.

Q. What effect do you think the failure of the UNO to deal justly with the South African Indian dispute will have on the future of that organization?

A. If the UNO fails to deal justly with the South African Indian dispute, the UNO will lose its prestige. I have no doubt that the UNO can prosper only if it is just.

Q. And what will be the effect of the failure on the world?

A. About the effect on the world no one knows. At least I do not.

Q. Racial inequality must be removed, if there is to be peace in the world. What is your advice to those who

agree with this, but do nothing to fight the evil of racial inequality?

A. Those who agree that racial inequality must be removed and yet do nothing to fight the evil are impotent. I cannot have anything to say to such people. After all, the under-dogs will have to earn their own salvation.

Q. What remedy do you propose for the elimination of racial prejudice and antagonisms from the affairs of mankind?

A. The solution is largely in India's hands. If everything is all right in India internally, she is likely to play an effective part in straightening up affairs.

Q. What message have you for our countrymen overseas living in a distracted world?

A. The spirit of India at its best should be exhibited by each one in his own person. Our shortcomings must be buried in India.

—*Harijan*: Oct. 26, 1947.

#### XCV

### NON-VIOLENCE

*"There is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never of the Eternal Law."*

I WOULD LOVE to attempt an answer to a question which has been addressed to me from more than one quarter of the globe. It is:

"How can you account for the growing violence among your people on the part of political parties for the furtherance of political ends? Is this the result of the



thirty years of non-violent practice for ending British Rule? Does your message of non-violence still hold good for the world?"

I have condensed the sentiments of my correspondents in my own language.

In answer I must confess my bankruptcy, not that of non-violence. I have already said that the non-violence that was offered during the past thirty years was that of the weak. Whether it is a good enough answer or not is for others to judge. It must further be admitted that such non-violence can have no play in the altered circumstances. India has no experience of the non-violence of the strong. It serves no purpose for me to continue to repeat that the non-violence of the strong is the strongest force in the world. The truth requires constant and extensive demonstration. This I am endeavouring to do to the best of my ability. What if the best of my ability is very little? May I not be living in a fool's paradise? Why should I ask people to follow me in the fruitless search? These are pertinent questions. My answer is quite simple. I ask nobody to follow me. Everyone should follow his or her own inner voice. If he or she has no ears to listen to it, he or she should do the best he or she can. In no case should he or she imitate others sheep-like.

One more question has been and is being asked. "If you are sure that India is going the wrong way, why do you associate with the wrong-doers? Why do you not plough your own lonely furrow and have faith that if you are right, your erstwhile friends and followers will seek you out?" I regard this as a very fair question. I must not attempt to argue against it. All I can say is that my faith is as strong as ever. It is quite possible that my technique is faulty. There are old and tried precedents to guide one in such a complexity. Only, no one should act mechanically. Hence I can say to all my counsellors that they should have patience with me, and even share my belief that there is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow



and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never of the Eternal Law.

—*Harijan*: June 29, 1947.

XCVI

FROM AMERICA

*"There can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Yet he may live the full span of 125 years and may hope by ceaseless striving to make a place for himself. I am in that society, though not of it."*

Mr. Richard Gregg writes from U.S.A.:

"To-day's New York newspaper carries a despatch from New Delhi, stating that you have given up the hope of living for 125 years and that there is no place for you in India because of the deluge of violence. If this report is substantially correct, I beg you, please consider your attitude. As I see the matter, there is far more at stake than present violence in India, even if this should last for fifteen years.

"India is the source of the deepest and strongest spiritual insight and culture in the world. It is also the most enduring. Despite the grave harm that has been done to Hindu culture by the modern loss of religion and contact with the West which so fully embodies that secularism, Hindu culture still stands supreme. Most of the world will soon be ruined by violence and greed and godlessness, but I have hoped that there would be a remnant, no matter how small, in India which would keep its spiritual anchorage and be an island of hope and spiritual insight, which may

once more be the source of life and sanity for the stricken world.

"More than anyone else, you represent that Hindu culture, and the continuance of your life is of great importance to all the world. Even though for a time the number of those who agree with you and truly follow the road of *Ahimsa* may shrink to only a handful, the very smallness makes possible an enhancement of quality and spiritual power. Then when mankind have learned better out of their suffering, (it seems to be the only way most of them can learn), they will turn again to the spiritual sources. We may not tell God that if violence (the folly of men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can in order to do our utmost. I only dare say this to you because I want you so much to stay with us. . . .

"God bless you and keep you. Please, please, reconsider your discouragement and keep on living for the rest of the world as well as India. As I wrote to you in my last letter, there is always violence during and soon after the transference of political power between nations and groups. When the thirteen American Colonies broke away from Britain in 1776, we had our riots and fighting too. It was called Shay's rebellion. All history shows similar phenomena throughout the West, and enough of India has been infected by the Western ideas that it follows. But I hope the infection will end when the next war comes, and Indians see beyond any doubt where irreligious Western culture leads."

The despatch from which Mr. Gregg quotes is substantially correct. The loss of hope arises from my knowledge that I have not attained sufficient detachment and control over temper and emotions, which entitle one to entertain the hope. One day I found to my cost that I had not attained the required detachment. No one has the right

to live at all unless it is a life of service. And a man without detachment in terms of the *Gita* cannot render full service.

A faithful confession of one's failings is good for the soul. It enables one the better to get rid of those failings. Let the readers know that I am making every effort to get out of them so that I can regain the lost hope. In this connection, I should also repeat that the hope is open to every one who dedicates himself to the service of his fellowmen. Nor need it be laughed out as an idle dream. That it may not be realized in me and many fellow-aspirants should be no proof of its futility.

The statement, that I find no place for myself in a society that bases itself on violence, has nothing to do with the reported loss of hope. I deliberately use the adjective 'reported', for I do not want to harbour the thought of hopelessness. What was true when the report was made, need not be and is not true in an equal measure to-day.

It must be clear that there can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Yet he may live the full span of 125 years and may hope by ceaseless striving to make a place for himself. That is exactly the meaning of my second statement and no more. I am in that society, though not of it. The statement registers my protest.

Has the non-violent effort of the past 30 years come to naught? I have already argued out the position in my speeches. It is to be hoped that the violence has not penetrated India's villages. Be that as it may, I wholly endorse Mr. Gregg's warning that "we may not tell God that if violence (the folly of men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can." I very much fear that the despatch in question tore the sentences out of their context and evoked the doubts expressed by Mr. Gregg. I hope I am incapable of judging God.

—*Harijan*: June 29, 1947.

## NO DEPRESSION

*"No one has the capacity to judge God. We are drops in that limitless ocean of mercy."*

THIS IS FROM one of the many messages of birthday congratulations:

"May I suggest that the present situation should not depress you? In my opinion, this is the final attempt of the forces of evil to foil the Divine plan of India's contribution to the solution of the world's distress by way of non-violence. You are to-day the only instrument in the world to further the Divine purpose."

This is a telegram sent more out of personal affection than knowledge. Let us see.

It is perhaps wrong to describe my present state of mind as depression. I have but stated a fact. I am not vain enough to think that the Divine purpose can only be fulfilled through me. It is as likely as not that a fitter instrument will be used to carry it out, and that I was good enough to represent a weak nation, not a strong one. May it not be that a man purer, more courageous, more far-seeing is wanted for the final purpose? This is all speculation. No one has the capacity to judge God. We are drops in that limitless ocean of mercy.

Without doubt, the ideal thing would be neither to wish to live 125 years nor to wish to die now. Mine must be a state of complete resignation to the Divine Will. The ideal ceases to be that when it becomes real. All we can do is to make as near an approach to it as possible. This I am doing with as much energy as I can summon to my assistance.

If I had the impertinence openly to declare my wish to live 125 years, I must have the humility under changed circumstances openly to shed that wish. And I have done

no more, no less. This has not been done in a spirit of depression. The more apt term, perhaps, is helplessness. In that state, I invoke the aid of the all-embracing Power to take me away from this "vale of tears" rather than make me a helpless witness of the butchery by man become savage, whether he dares to call himself a Muslim or Hindu or what not. Yet I cry—"Not my will but Thine alone shall prevail." If He wants me, He will keep me here on this earth yet awhile.

—*Harijan*: October 12, 1947.

#### XCVIII

#### TWO AMERICAN FRIENDS' CONSOLATION

*"What India is passing through must be regarded as unusual. If we grant that such liberty as India has gained was a tribute to non-violence, as I have repeatedly said non-violence of India's struggle was only in name, in reality it was passive resistance of the weak."*

OF THE MANY letters that come to me from American friends whom I do not know, the following extracts from two such friends are worth quoting:

"Your great distress due to the unhappy situation in your country demands that I intrude upon your contemplations of the painful events now taking place in India, to remind you that your beautiful words have taken root in all the corners of the earth.

"That you should feel a degree of disillusionment because of these sad happenings is natural. That, that disillusionment should be measured and certainly not turn into discouragement, is the purpose of my letter.

"Never does the seed turn directly into a beautiful

fragrant flower without first going through certain phases of growth and development. And, if at some stage of its development—or growth—it falters, the presence of the gardener is more than ever required. In the complete absorption of the selfless task of nursing the ailing plant, the gardener perhaps cannot fully observe the growth of other plants in his garden, to join with him in his compassion for their stricken brother.

“I plead with you to give consideration to the countless numbers of people in all countries on earth, of all classes, races and creeds, who are now also praying for peace. These people, whose hopes you have so well expressed and who took fresh courage from these victories which you did achieve with the Science of Peace, must now join me in prayer that the Master bless you and preserve you to continue your noble work, so much of which is still to be done.”

What they say may prove true and that the senseless blood-bath through which India is still passing, though the original fury seems to have abated, may be nothing unusual as history goes. What India is passing through must be regarded as unusual. If we grant that such liberty as India has gained was a tribute to non-violence, as I have repeatedly said non-violence of India's struggle was only in name, in reality it was passive resistance of the weak. The truth of the statement we see demonstrated by the happenings in India.

—*Harijan*: November 16, 1947.

## “DO NOT LOSE HEART”

*“In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in non-violence for an unbroken period of thirty-two years since 1915.”*

[The following is from Madame Edmond Privat's letter dated 27th August 1947 to Gandhiji:]

“To-day I feel I must tell you how very deeply we have been moved by the late great events occurring to India, I mean her liberation and how we rejoiced over it.

“Yes, we know that you are not happy about it all—we read your article in the *Harijan*, but O Bapu! do not lose heart. Think, O *do* think of the significance it means for us in the Occident: That India did her revolution without shedding the blood of her opponent and was liberated, is an immense progress on the past; it is a point reached in history without precedent on such a scale.

“O Bapu! For us in the Occident, just emerging from a terrific bath of blood, cannot you see how bright, luminous, divine appears to us the new dawn in India!

“Do be consoled, encouraged, braced up by our wonderful hope; you whom we regard not only as our spiritual leader, but also as an example of a man who has lived his faith fully in the daily life without losing his sense of proportion or humour. After all, is it not you who have taught us this precious message of your

religion, to work with all our heart without expecting any result, leaving the rest in God's care? Well, you did what you did with all your faith and courage, and now God shows us what can be achieved by non-violence as a wonderful hope, the only means for us to save our civilization from destruction. That the non-violence used was not always perfect was perhaps the case, but certainly the sincere efforts of your good people inspired by you, was there, I am convinced.

"Let us hope that we shall be worthy of this message and use it here to its full possibility.

"It is true, only a few people here understand its real meaning, but the soil is ready to receive it: 'Let us work with heart within and God overhead!'

"Your article in *Harijan* of 27th July 1947,\* to which I was alluding at the beginning of this letter, is going to appear, translated by Edmond, in the next *Essor*. (In fact, the whole number is on India).

"I am glad for the readers of *Essor* that they should see once more this point emphasized by you and their attention drawn energetically to it, i.e., the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violence.

"The more I think about it the more I am convinced that people do not grasp, cannot grasp this difference.

\* In the article referred to, Gandhiji said:

"I have frankly and fully admitted that what we practised during the past thirty years was not non-violent resistance, but passive resistance which only the weak offer because they are unable, not unwilling, to offer armed resistance. If we knew the use of non-violent resistance which only those with hearts of oak can offer, we would present to the world a totally different picture of free India instead of an India cut in twain, one part highly suspicious of the other and the two too much engaged in mutual strife to be able to think cogently of the food and clothing of the hungry and naked millions, who know no religion but that of the one and only God who appears to them in the guise of the necessities of life. Not for them the sanguinary strife or the cinema pictures showing them how efficiently to cut one another's throats!"

—*Harijan*: July 27, 1947.



They use passive resistance and, not succeeding, they get discouraged, though yet they may be perfectly sincere in their endeavours.

"Often the fact is that people *unconsciously* lie to themselves.

"That is why lately I have been trying to get a little knowledge about psycho-analysis. Formerly, one used to explain to people that one had to be aware of the great guile of Satan in his working in our heart.

"Nowadays people want more scientific methods to reach at Truth and, apart from therapeutic means to cure neurosis, psycho-analysis can help normal people to get clear with the mechanisms of their feelings and attain thus a fuller consciousness which enables them, if they are sincere, to use real non-violence."

[To this letter Gandhiji replied:]

I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violent resistance. Resistance both forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance full of wisdom by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the *New Testament* for the first time, I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four Gospels, and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a Passive Resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the *Old Testament* and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction, for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history—modern or ancient.

Coming to my personal experience, whilst we undoubt-

edly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace like you and your good husband of the West are enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made, or, better, still, I made, in mistaking passive resistance for non-violent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of strong brother killing his weak brother thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

I am only hoping and praying, and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me, that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India—not war-like, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world.

I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for, we are to-day swearing by the military and all that naked physical force implies. Our statesmen have for over two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and still threatens to increase, and of this we are proud! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death-dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in non-violence, for an unbroken period of thirty-two years since 1915.

—*Harijan*: December 7, 1947.

## OUTSIDE HIS FIELD

*"I make bold to say that in this age of the Atom Bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together of violence."*

MAJOR GENERAL CARIAPPA is reported to have said as follows:

"Non-violence is of no use under the present circumstances in India, and only a strong army can make India one of the greatest nations in the world."

I fear, like many experts, General Cariappa has gone beyond his depth and has been unwittingly betrayed into a serious misconception of *Ahimsa*, of whose working in the nature of things, he can only have a very superficial knowledge. By reason of life-long practice of *Ahimsa*, I claim to be an expert in it, though very imperfect. Speaking in absolute terms, the more I practise it the clearer I see how far I am from the full expression of *Ahimsa* in my life. It is his ignorance of this, the greatest duty of man in the world, which makes him say that in this age non-violence has little scope in the face of violence, whereas I make bold to say that in this age of the Atom Bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together of violence. It would have become the General, unaided as he can only now be, by his British teachers of military science and practice, not to have gone out of his depth. Generals greater than General Cariappa have been wise and humble enough to make the admission that they can have no right to speak of the possibilities of the force of *Ahimsa*. We are witnessing the tragic insolvency of military science and practice in its own home. Should a bankrupt, who has been ruined by the gamble in

the share market, sing the praise of that particular form of gambling?

—*Harijan*: November 16, 1947.

## CI

## NO LIMITATIONS

*“Why can we not see that if the sum total of the world’s activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago? Love, otherwise Ahimsa, sustains this planet of ours.”*

A CORRESPONDENT SAYS in substance:

“Individual *Ahimsa* I can understand. Corporate *Ahimsa* between friends is also intelligible. But you talk of *Ahimsa* towards avowed enemies. This is like a mirage. It will be a mercy if you give up this obstinacy of yours. If you do not, you will forfeit the esteem you enjoy. What is worse, you, being considered a *Mahatma*, mislead many credulous persons to their own and society’s harm.”

That non-violence which only an individual can use is not of much use in terms of society. Man is a social being. His accomplishments to be of use must be such as any person with sufficient diligence can attain. That which can be exercised only among friends is of value only as a spark of non-violence. It cannot merit the appellation of *Ahimsa*. ‘Enmity vanishes before *Ahimsa*’ is a great aphorism. It means that the greatest enmity requires an equal measure of *Ahimsa* for its abatement. Cultivation of this virtue may need long practice, even extending to several births. It does not become useless on that account. Travelling along the route, the pilgrim will meet richer

experiences from day to day so that he may have a glimpse of the beauty he is destined to see at the top. This will add to his zest. No one is entitled to infer from this that the path will be a continuous carpet of roses without thorns. A poet has sung that the way to reach God accrues only to the very brave, never to the faint-hearted. The atmosphere to-day is so much saturated with poison, that one refuses to recollect the wisdom of the ancients and to perceive the varied little experiences of *Ahimsa* in action. 'A bad turn is neutralized by a good one', is a wise saying of daily experience in practice. Why can we not see that if the sum total of the world's activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago. Love, otherwise *Ahimsa*, sustains this planet of ours.

This much must be admitted. The precious grace of life has to be strenuously cultivated, naturally so because it is uplifting. Descent is easy, not so ascent. A large majority of us, being undisciplined, our daily experience is that of fighting and swearing at one another on the slightest pretext.

This, the richest grace of *Ahimsa*, will descend easily upon the owner of hard discipline.

—*Harijan*: December 14, 1947.

## CH

### AHIMSA NEVER FAILS

*"The proper way to view the present outburst of violence throughout the world is to recognize that the technique of unconquerable non-violence of the strong has not been at all fully discovered as yet."*

[From a European friend to Gandhiji:]

"After carefully studying Roy Walker's thrilling story

of your admirable work (*Sword of Gold*) I was satisfied that, life-long as your struggle for non-violence had been, your unlimited devotion had met with success, at least as far as India's leaders and masses were concerned, and the fact that Britain retired from India in apparent goodwill and friendship, seemed to bear out the hope that appreciation of non-violence was no longer restricted to your own country. The first breach into the thick walls of violence seemed made, and the prospects for humanity seemed to have grown more lucid than ever.

"All the more depressing were your recent confessions, as reported in the last edition of *Peace News* by George Ll. Davies. It grieves me to the heart to read that you had never experienced the dark despair that was to-day within you. And though it is certainly true that God does not demand success but truth and love from a man, it is a sad sight to behold mankind as deeply entangled by violence as not to yield to the vast extent of soul-force and self-sacrifice given by you and your friends during a long life.

"However, willingly admitting as I do that you are in a far better position to look into the heart of things than I am, I cannot believe that your heroic efforts should be lost upon mankind, that the good seed you have utiringly sown in all your surroundings, by your words as well as by your example, should be wasted.

"Be that as it may, I for one (and I am sure I speak the heart of untold millions) feel it my bounden duty to express my deepest gratitude to you for giving the whole of your life to what you felt to be the one way to salvation for mankind."

[In reply to the above, Gandhiji wrote:]

I have not seen the report you refer to. In any case, whatever I have said does not refer in any way to the

failure of *Ahimsa*, but it refers to my failure to recognize, until it was too late, that what I had mistaken for *Ahimsa* was not *Ahimsa*, but passive resistance of the weak, which can never be called *Ahimsa* even in the remotest sense. The internecine feud that is going on to-day in India is the direct outcome of the energy that was set free during the thirty years' action of the weak. Hence, the proper way to view the present outburst of violence throughout the world is to recognize that the technique of unconquerable non-violence of the strong has not been at all fully discovered as yet. Not an ounce of non-violent strength is ever wasted. I must not, therefore, flatter myself with the belief — nor allow friends like you to entertain the belief — that I have exhibited any heroic and demonstrable non-violence in myself. All I can claim is that I am sailing in that direction without a moment's stop. This confession should strengthen your belief in non-violence and spur you and friends like you to action along the path.

—*Harijan*: January 11, 1948.

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